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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	92025859	
Party	Defendant General Cigar Co., Inc.	
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Attachments	GCC NOR Ex. 30 Cigar Aficionado - December 2019 (Part 01).pdf(5678347 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 30 Cigar Aficionado - December 2019 (Part 02).pdf(5749200 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 30 Cigar Aficionado - December 2019 (Part 03).pdf(5729686 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 30 Cigar Aficionado - December 2019 (Part 04).pdf(3864310 bytes)	

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In the matter of Trademark Reg For the mark COHIBA Date registered: February 17, 19	•	
AND		
In the matter of the Trademark For the mark COHIBA Date registered: June 6, 1995		
EMPRESA CUBANA DEL CUBATABACO,		x : :
	Petitioner,	: Cancellation No. 92025859
v.		:
GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.,	,	:
	Respondent.	:

EXHIBIT 30

TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE

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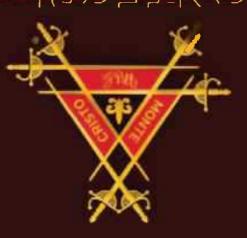
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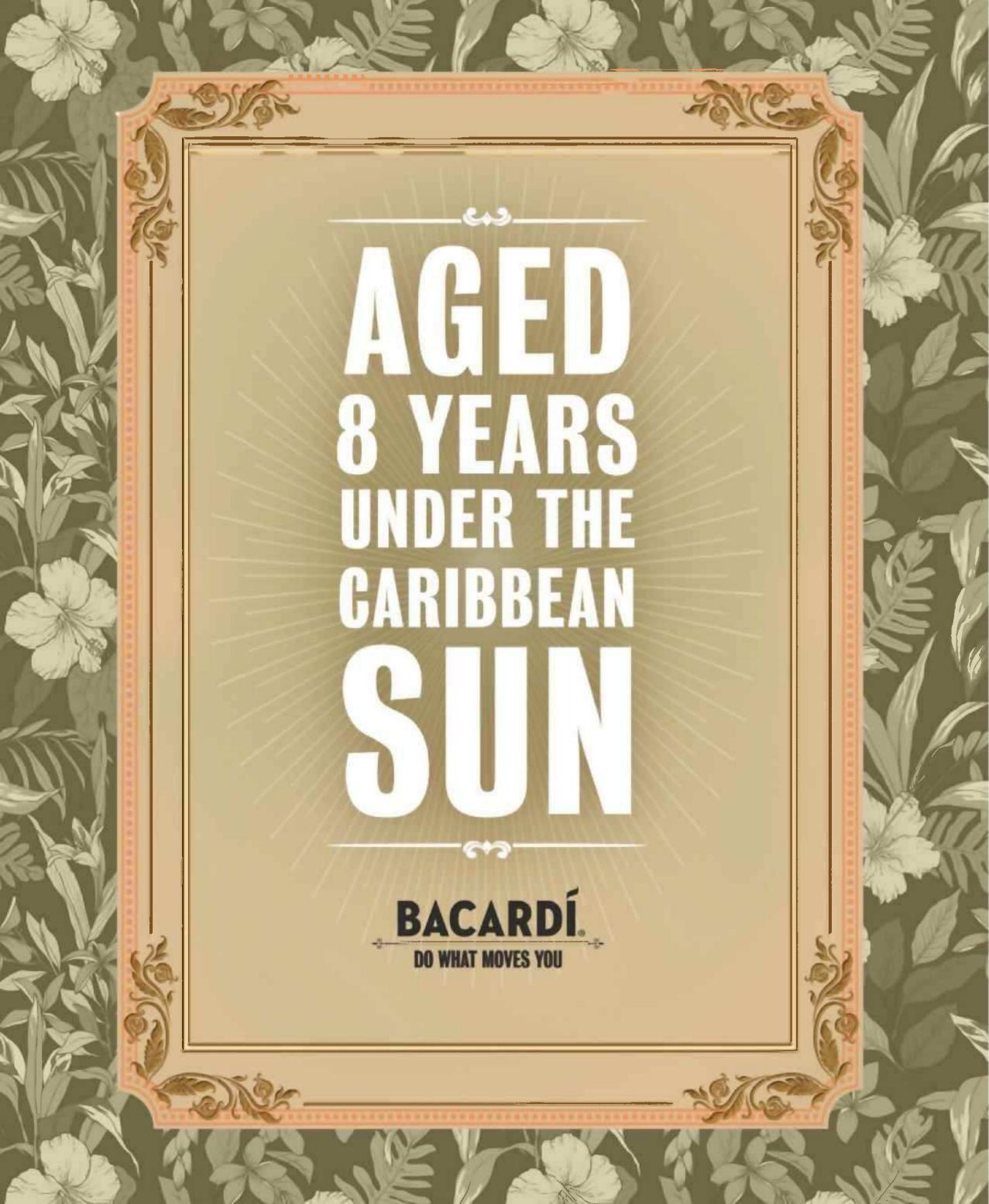


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ONE AMAZING MAN, ONE TRULY AMAZING STORY...



TOP: NIKO TAVERNISE / NETFLIX; CENTER: JULIE SOEFER

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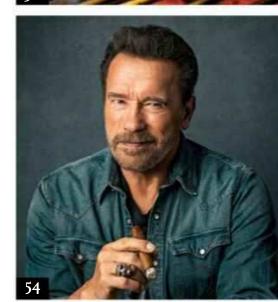
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ON THE COVER
The oversized world of
Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Photographed exclusively
for CIGAR AFICIONADO
by Jim Wright

BA AROMA DE CUBA





A taste from another time



laaromadecuba.com

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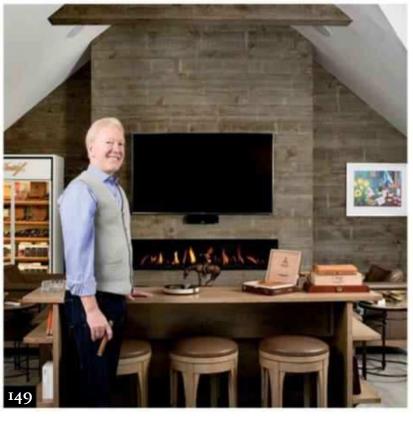
Photos from our readers as they enjoy themselves and their cigars.

168 MADE FOR YOU

Your old baseball glove reborn as a wallet; a four-probe meat thermometer; a beer growler that keeps its head; contemporary furniture with old-school craftsmanship; a card case swathed in leather; and cookery with a need for speed.







highlights

This turned out to be a fantastic tasting. Thirty-eight cigars—nearly half the 81 we rated—scored 90 points or better. Nicaragua's reputation for producing top-quality cigars continued, as the Central American country led or tied for the top spot in three of the six size categories, and a former Cigar of the Year returned to our pages in a big way.



TOP ROBUSTO

COHIBA BEHIKE BHK 52

This is the smallest size in the lauded Behike line, but this former Cigar of the Year has shown once again why it is so sought after by connoisseurs.

CUBA

94



TOP CHURCHILL

LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR CHURCHILL

Covered in an alluringly dark Mexican wrapper, this Churchill is made for Ashton Distributors Inc. by My Father Cigars in Estelí.

NICARAGUA

93



TOP CORONA GORDA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES EXCLUSIVO

This famed, box-pressed smoke from Padrón led the corona gorda (also known as toro) category, tying with the H. Upmann Magnum 50 from Cuba.

NICARAGUA

93



TOP PANETELA

HERRERA ESTELI HABANO EDICION LIMITADA LANCERO NICARAGUA

After a five-year hiatus, Drew Estate brought back this unique size earlier this year. It's rolled with a gorgeous Ecuadoran Habano cover leaf.

93



TOP FIGURADO

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY SIGNATURE

A beautiful Cameroon wrapper covers this shapely smoke, which tied with the Davidoff Nicaragua Diadema for top honors among figurados.

DOM. REP.

92



TOP MISCELLANEOUS

E.P. CARRILLO LA HISTORIA EL SENADOR

Rolled in the Dominican Republic, this smoke tied for the top spot with the Balmoral Añejo XO Connecticut Petit Robusto FT.

DOM. REP.

92



BEST BUY

PADRÓN 2000 MADURO

Though a bit rough in appearance, this \$6.10 cigar brings a richness and complexity that defies its price point.

NICARAGUA

92



DON JULIO'S ORIGINAL PRIVATE RESERVE TEQUILA

FOR THOSE WHO KNOW





editors' note

Screen Magic

Te were at the New York City premiere of *The Irishman*, Martin Scorsese's epic new film starring Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci. The September 27 screening was scheduled to begin at 8 pm at Lincoln Center, and with speeches before the movie (including one by Scorsese himself) and an introduction of the all-star cast, it was after midnight by the time we left.

Despite its almost three-and-a-half-hour running time, the story grabbed us from beginning to end with performances that are sure to garner Oscar nominations. The story behind the film's creation is equally compelling. A decade in the making, its budget swelled to \$160 million on the cost of the ultramodern technology used to make actors in their 70s look (at times) like they are in their 20s. Controversy even swelled over where it should be shown as an awards contender. You can read all about it on page 70. The movie hits theaters November 1 and will be released on Netflix November 27.

But that's hardly the only big movie coming out this holiday season. One of our favorite actors, Arnold Schwarzenegger, is returning to the role that made him a movie star with the November 1 release of *Terminator: Dark Fate*. Arnold is far more than an entertainer. He's a businessman who made his first million before he started earning big checks as an actor, a former California governor and an unapologetic cigar smoker. Our cover story takes you to his home in California where he talks about a wide range of topics. With this, his fourth appearance on our cover, Arnold is breaking the record he set himself.

There's plenty more in this year-end issue. We'll introduce you to such rising superstars of the golf world as Cameron Champ, the 24-year-old who won the Safeway Open in September, hitting one of his drives 369 yards. We'll take you into the cellars of the world's great Cognac makers and sample their finest brandies. And we travel to the evolving landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, where Connecticut shade plantings are in steep decline. And we'll show you dozens of great steakhouses that put out the welcome mat for cigar smokers, allowing you to light your cigar after your meal. It's all there, along with 81 cigar reviews to help guide you through the humidor at your favorite cigar shop.

Enjoy the issue.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN EDITOR & PUBLISHER

DAVID SAVONA EXECUTIVE EDITOR

EATHER)



ARDE IN THE US SWCE 2003

Pete Johnson Havana Cellars

havanacellars.com

out of the humidor

Dear Marvin,

What a great cover! A guy who enjoys great premium cigars. We have all been younger cigar smokers, and this is the lifeblood and legacy of our business. Cheers to you. *Max Patel*

Submitted via Instagram

Dear Marvin,

I don't know much about these guys, I don't care for pop music like this, but kudos to Nick Jonas for having the guts to be his own man and not only enjoy premium cigars but be on the cover. I'm sure there are some PC dorks who will have something to say about him "encouraging smoking." He may not have me as a music fan, but he's got my respect.

Dan Scarlett Submitted via Facebook

Dear Marvin,

I appreciate that he likes cigars, but what the heck else do most of your readers and [Nick Jonas] have in common? Considering that the articles usually talk more about the celebrity than they do cigars.

Daniel Russell Submitted via Facebook

Dear Marvin,

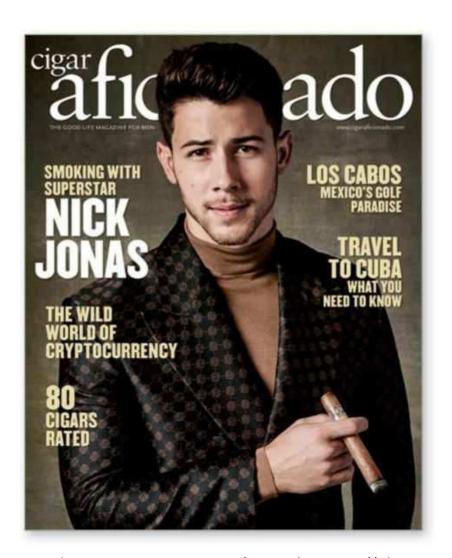
I started smoking cigars at 25. Now I'm 33. When I walk into a lounge I'm always the youngest guy there. It's good to see the culture reaching out to a younger generation. *Jason Davenport*

Dallas, Texas

Dear Marvin,

It's kind of cool to see someone in the spotlight close to my own age who enjoys cigars, even if I don't really care for his music. The cigar world needs more current representatives.

Evan Edmondson Cullman, Alabama



"What a great cover! We have all been younger cigar smokers, and this is the lifeblood and legacy of our business."

—Max Patel
Submitted via Instagram

Dear Marvin,

I have subscribed to your magazine for many years. I truly look forward to each issue and enjoy all of the content while having a dram of whiskey with a good cigar. I was very interested in your recent Editors' Note on "Cigars for the Troops" [July/August 2019].

It reminded me of my close friend and classmate, David Morley M.D. We graduated from Queens University, Kingston Ontario, Canada, in 1956. He was a navy pilot on a carrier in the Pacific in World War II, and he practiced psychiatry in Connecticut until his death some 25 years ago. He had two sons, an orthopedic surgeon and



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SHEENA DELLANZO

Questions about your subscription? Call 800/365-4929 Questions about your retail sales account? Call 800/344-0763 ex-marine practicing in Maine and surrounding area, and another son, a writer.

Dave recounted a battle in the Pacific during "the big storm" while under attack by the Japanese. The pilots were ordered to launch from the aircraft carrier and intercept the enemy during this storm. Every second plane was hit by large waves on takeoff and pilots perished. When Dave's turn came, he chomped down on his unlit cigar—he didn't smoke—said a prayer and took off. The waves parted and he survived his run.

I was never in the service but heartily endorse cigars for the troops who serve. As you pointed out: "It is a simple and deserved comfort no legislator should deny."

I would be happy to hear from anyone who knew Dr. David Morley. *John Minich M.D. Grimsby, Ontario, Canada*

"He chomped down on his unlit cigar, said a prayer and took off."

—John Minich M.D.

Grimsby, Ontario, Canada

Dear Marvin,

Having been a fan of the show "The Sopranos," and having read the recent piece twice ["First Family," April 2019], I'm curious about what brands of cigars were smoked on set by James Gandolfini and others. I look forward to every issue and have found some new favorites since subscribing. I am also currently working my way through the Top 25 of 2018 as a personal goal. Thanks for all you and your staff do for us stogie fans and keep up the good work.

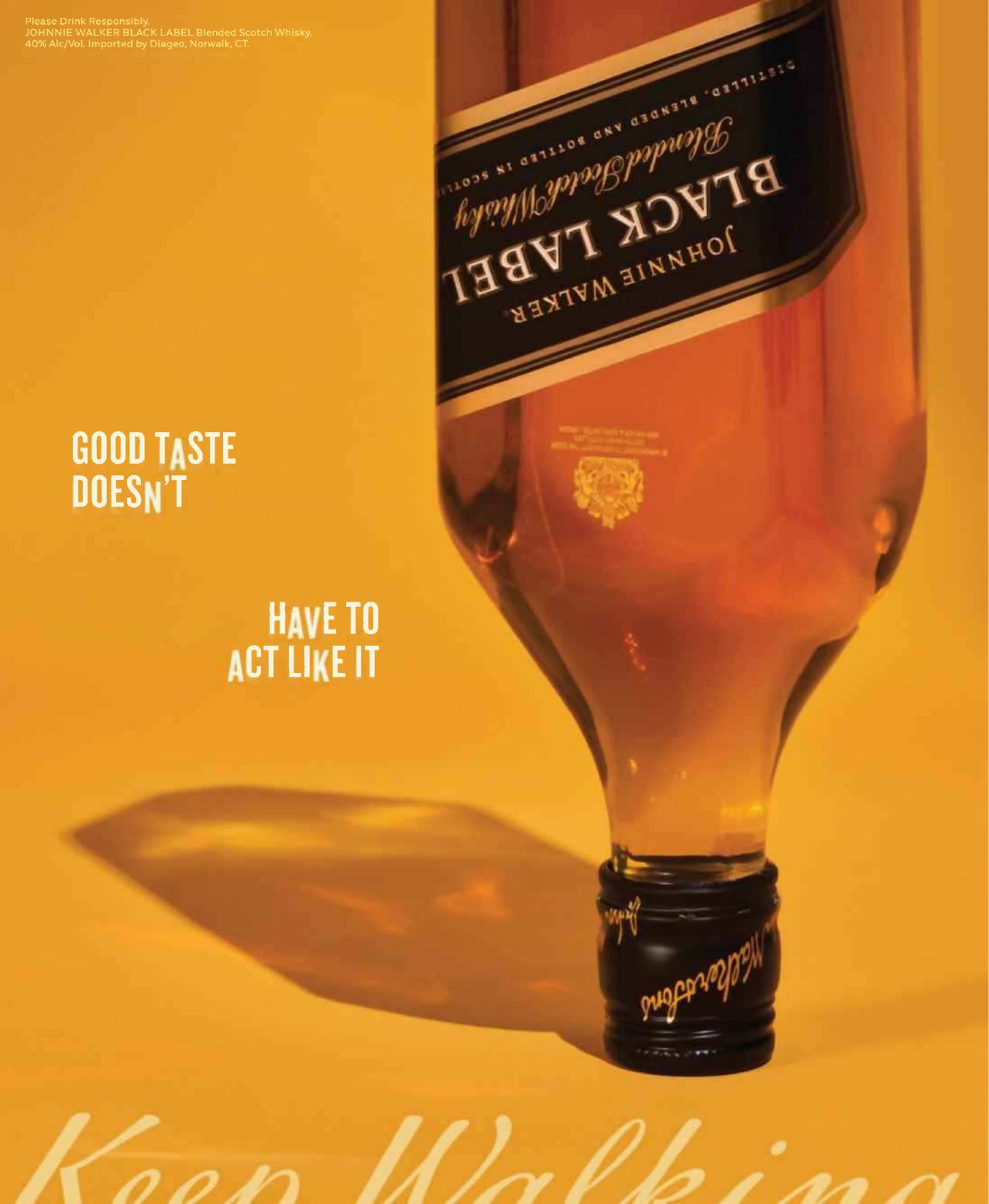
David Williams Faison, North Carolina

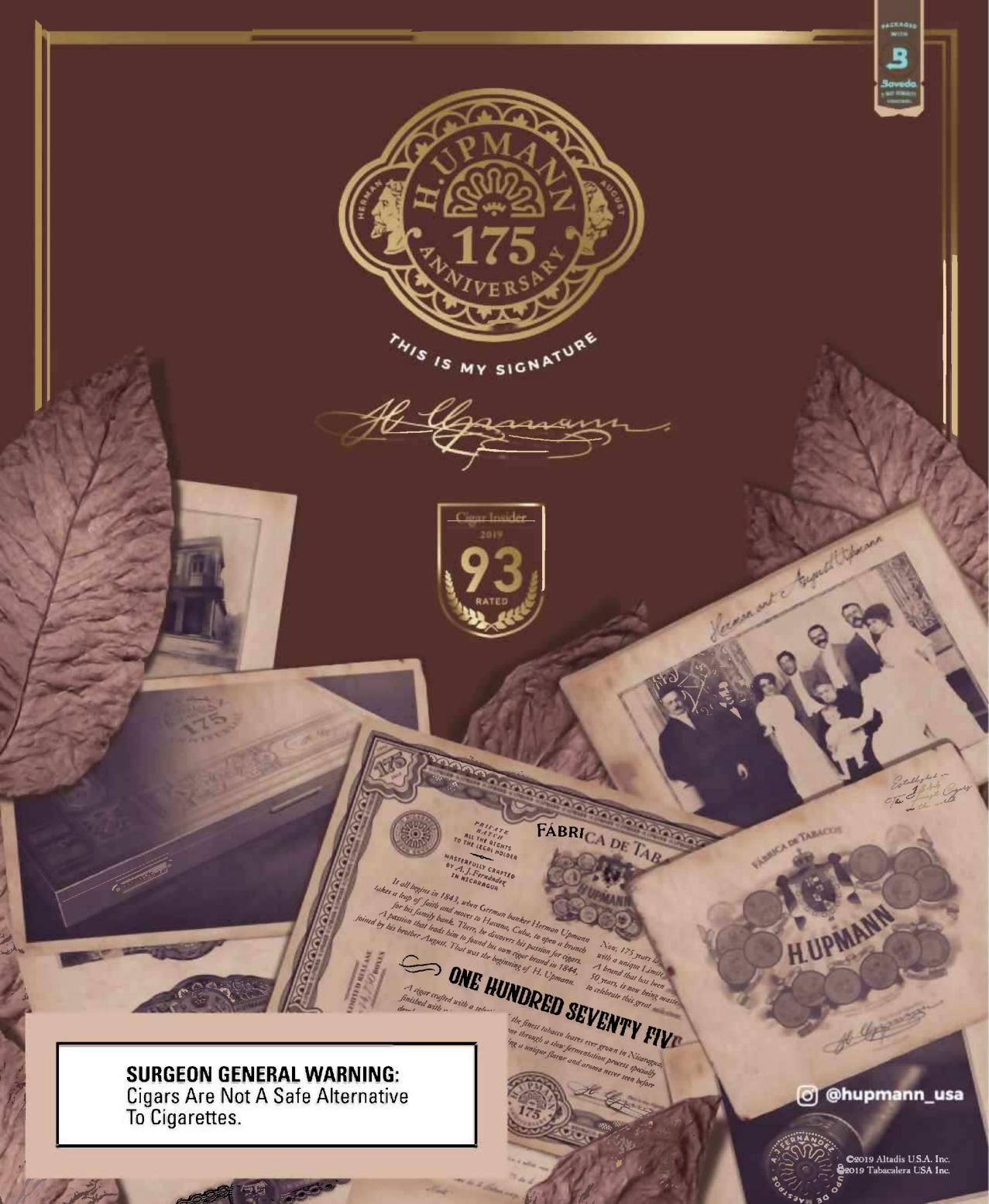
Editors' Response: A host of different cigars were smoked on the show, so it's hard to name a specific brand. And we admire you for smoking through our Top 25—we trust you'll enjoy the cigars as much as we did. And with our next issue, we'll unveil a new list of 25 cigars for your next challenge. ❖

Corrections

The cover story on Nick Jonas ["The Jonas Effect," October 2019] had an incorrect reference to Sean "Casper" Johnson. While he worked with Tatuaje brand owner Pete Johnson, the two men are not related.

The Tatuaje Reserva Petite Cazadores rating from the Nick Jonas issue had incorrect information. The cigar is rolled in Nicaragua, and it is made with a Connecticut-broadleaf wrapper.







guide

Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.



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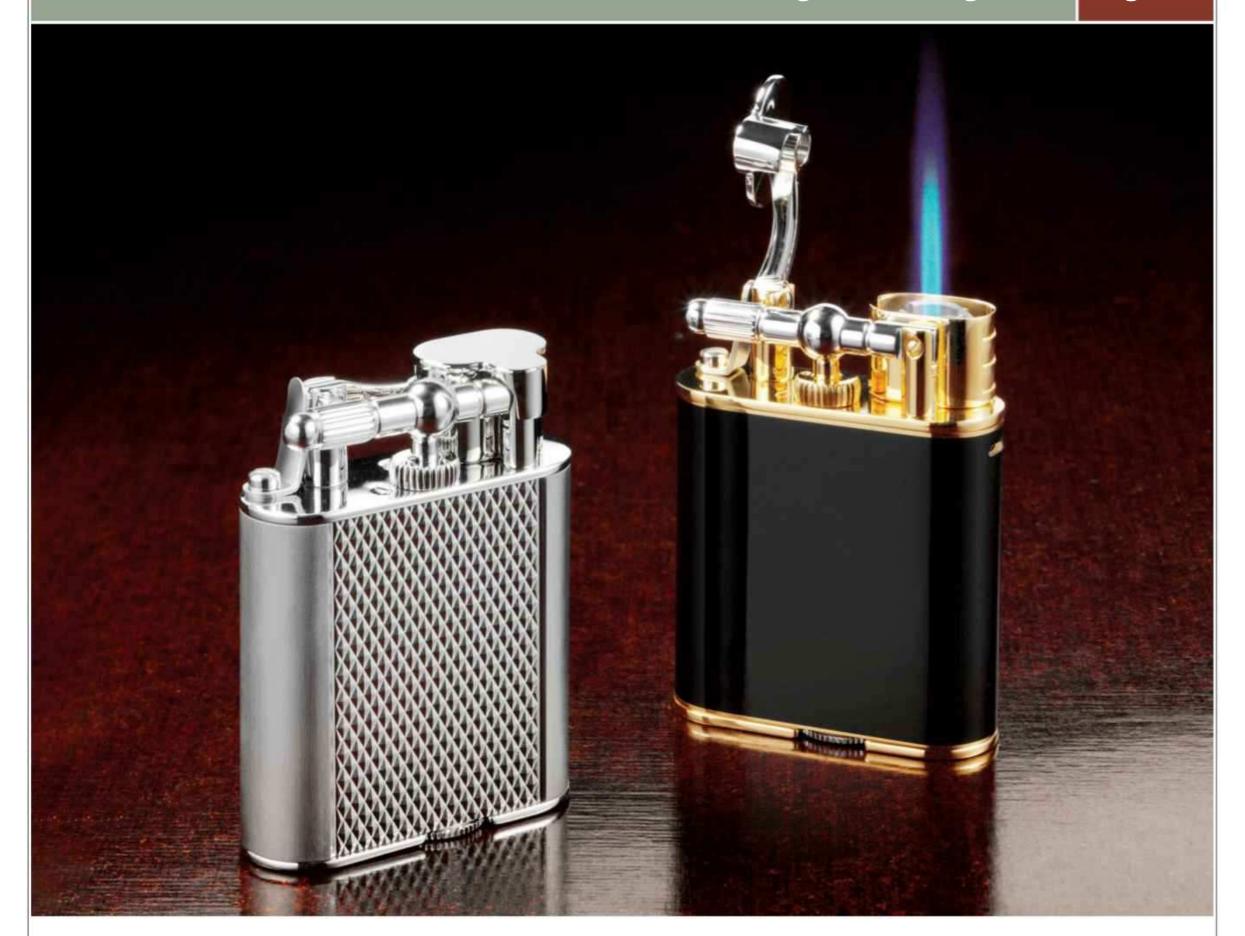












Dunhill Unique Turbo Lighters

Ifred Dunhill, the great signifier of British luxury, has resurrected its classic Unique Sports lighter model from the 1920s, reengineering it for the 21st century as a jet-flame torch. At first glance, the new Unique Turbo lighters are virtually identical to the original models that first appeared during the economic boom following WWI when both England and the U.S. were prime markets for high-end goods.

Historically accurate details like the horizontal flint tube and elongated snuff arm have been faithfully rendered, giving it the unmistakable elegance of proper Dunhill design. It even has the original windscreen around the base of the flame nozzle. Dunhill added the windscreen to its Unique Sports models nearly 100 years ago for better outdoor ignition.

The old lighters produced only soft, natural flames. These new models run on butane, and operation is quite easy—flick open the snuff arm and press down the flint tube to conjure a wind-resistant jet flame that reaches 1,500 degrees Celsius (2,732 degrees F).

The Unique Turbo is made in Switzerland from solid brass and is offered in two new finishes: the Black Lacquer has palladium-and gold-plated trim (\$995) and the ET Diamond is palladium plated (\$1,095) with an engine-turned diamond pattern flanked by brushed metal side panels. Both finishes come straight out of the archival Dunhill catalogs, putting all the quaintness and charm of a British period drama right in the palm of your hand.

Visit dunhill.com

-Gregory Mottola

drink

good life guide



Rye Manhattan

s with many cocktails, the origin story of the Manhattan cocktail tells many tales. The most logical says that it sprang from New York City's Manhattan Club in the early 1880s. The most satisfying, yet unlikely, is that Winston Churchill's mother introduced it at a political celebration. What isn't disputed is that the Manhattan was the first cocktail to put vermouth together with a spirit in a glass—and that said spirit was straight rye whiskey. The addition would engender a slew of aromatized classics—the Martini, the Rob Roy, the Metropole—and you can be forgiven if you make your Manhattan with some other sort of whiskey. The fortunes of rye—once America's favorite whiskey—would be lashed by Prohibition, and drinkers tended to make their Manhattans with Canadian whiskey, often called rye, although as a blend it doesn't qualify as a straight whiskey.

One of the happiest results of the recent cocktail culture revival has been the rediscovery of original ingredients and the concomitant redevelopment of the rye category. Having fallen to a handful of examples, rye is now one of the most popular spirits introduced by craft distillers. Moreover, new vermouths are arriving regularly. Lest we forget, another sometimes misplaced ingredient, bitters, is enjoying a comeback with a breadth of selections.

Don't approach the Manhattan like a Martini by trying to make it very dry. You may tinker with the ratios, but the idea is to feature both main ingredients. The rye, with its spicy nature, and vermouth, with its riot of botanicals, should show through and create a tug-of-war between manic energy and sophistication that describes the New York City borough for which it is named.

A fine start to homing in on your favorite Manhattan is to start with two ounces of the profound Master's Keep rye from Wild Turkey, a long-time champion of rye. Add one ounce of the sultry Carpano Antica Formula vermouth and two dashes orange bitters. Shake or stir with ice. Strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with cherry of lemon twist. Repeat if necessary.

-Jack Bettridge

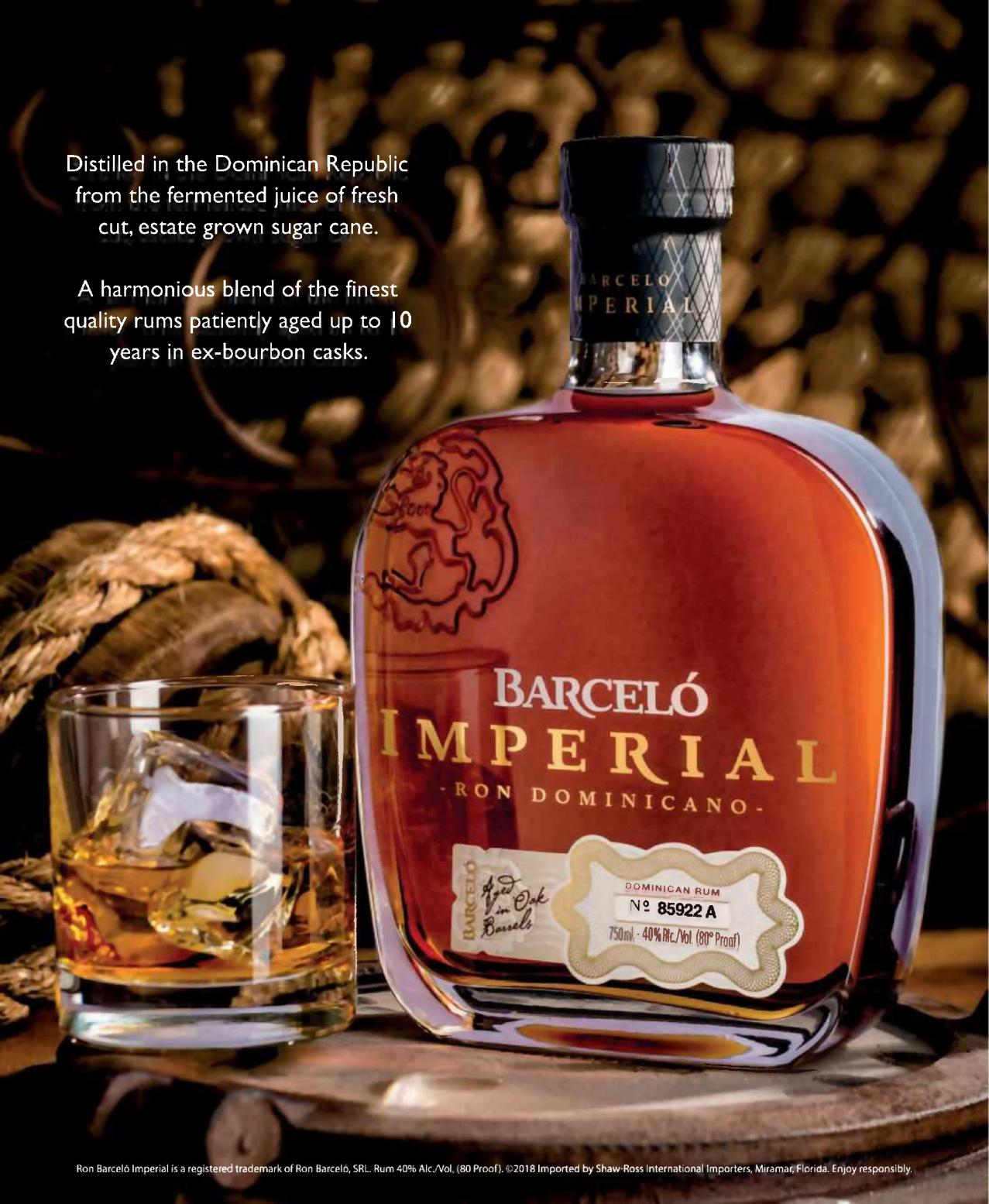




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Chapelo Bespoke Hats

onathan Rodebaugh lowers a skeletal, black contraption onto my head, its weight sinking into my hair. It looks like a medieval torture device, but thankfully it's not dangerous. The Victorian-era headgear is called a conformateur—and it only measures the shape of your head. Though it may seem archaic, high-end hat makers like Rodebaugh, founder of Chapelo, believe that the conformateur is one of the most important instruments for creating perfect-fitting headwear for his clients.

"It's one of three tools we use, along with a measuring tape and head caliper," Rodebaugh says. "The measurements we take are used to create a custom-fitting hat to your exact head shape."

Rodebaugh writes down your specifics, then sits with you to discuss the type of hat you'd like him to make. "We offer three hat styles," Rodebaugh explains. There's the Bennett (which is a trilby, a hat made with a short crown and small brim), the Pinkerton (a classic business fedora) and the Catherwood (an adventurer's fedora

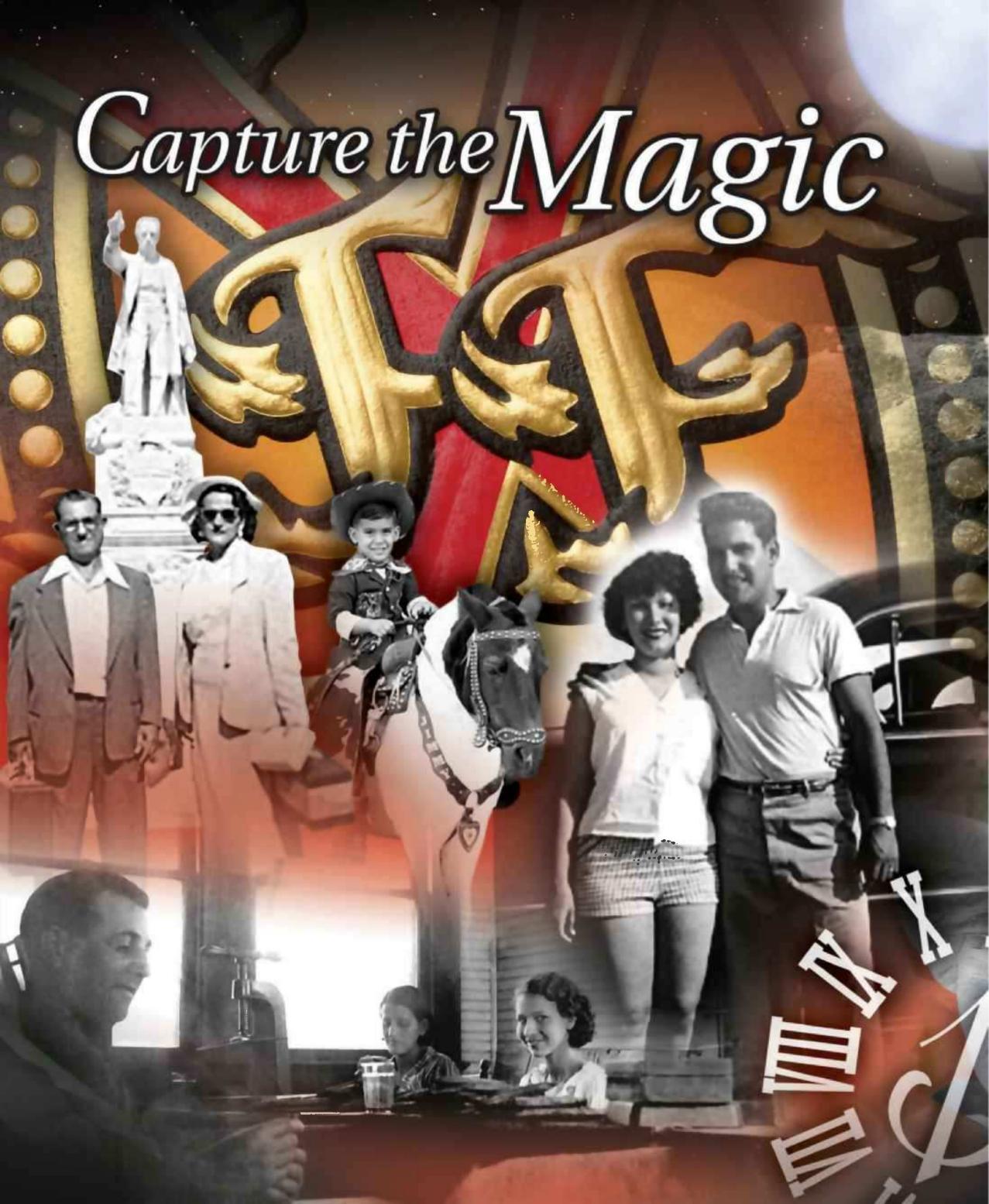
with a larger brim to withstand the elements). Picture the hats of Frank Sinatra, Humphrey Bogart or Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones, and you can imagine the variety of headwear that Chapelo creates.

After you've selected a style, the next step is to select your hat's felt and ribbon color combination. Here, Rodebaugh's attention to detail is truly impressive, and elements of each hat can be further customized to include adjustments to crown height, brim width and detail work.

Chapelo hats are handcrafted from 100 percent American beaver felt and are made in the United States at the company's Sylvania, Ohio, workshop. Each hat takes three to four weeks to complete and comes with a storage box, a block to help maintain its shape and a hat brush for keeping it looking its best. Pricing starts at \$1,295. Appointments can be arranged on the website.

Visit chapelo.com

—David Clough



Chateau de la Fuente



Whitave of a Direcuni

ARTHON CHELLER

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good life guide



Four Seasons Whistler

anada's massive Whistler Blackcomb is not the best because it is the biggest, but it helps—in skiing, size does matter. So does snow, and on average the merged ski areas get a whopping 458 inches, around 100 more than the top mountains in Utah and Colorado. At a full mile high, it's also got more vertical than any U.S. resort, it's the biggest ski resort in North America, it's the most popular ski resort in North America and is perennially ranked the best. It is home to a world-class Nordic center built for the Vancouver Olympic Games and boasts a wide range of places to stay—the best of which is the Four Seasons Whistler.

While that hotel is only 15 years old, it has had a top-to-bottom renovation that includes complete makeovers of all 273 rooms and suites (there are also luxury residences for rent). The slopeside ski concierge, previously in a makeshift home, now has a dedicated full-service lounge in a building at the base of Blackcomb Mountain. The exquisite spa was redone last year, and in anticipation of the 2019-2020 ski season, the rooms and lobby have followed suit.

Every guestroom (starting at C\$440, or about \$333, in ski season) has a private balcony, working granite fireplace and stunning views framed by oversized windows with comfy window seats. The Four Season's signature luxury bathrooms (endless marble, tub and oversized walk-in showers) have all-new

furnishings and fixtures that combine contemporary urban design elements with a classic lodge feel. Rooms now have sleek, ironframed leather chairs, raw-edged wooden coffee tables, brass lamps, sculptural ceiling light fixtures and woven textile wall coverings. What has not changed is their spacious size, the largest of any hotel here. The most basic rooms span well over 500 square feet, with couches and sitting area.

One creative in-room addition is the "Interior & Tonic" experience designed in partnership with the Okanagan Spirits Craft Distillery. The custom-made botanical gin magically changes colors when the tonic and bitters are added. Other experiential touches are everywhere, from the vintage camping trailer that serves poolside s'mores and adult beverages to the "Ski With an Olympian" option.

Its main restaurant, SideCut Modern Steak + Bar, emphasizes the vast culinary bounty of British Columbia, both land and sea. There's a signature 40-day dry-aged, 48-ounce long-bone "cowboy" ribeye from grass-fed, drug-free steers, fresh local oysters and mussels, farmstead cheeses and produce from local farms. At Whistler, where to ski in winter or what course to golf in summer season are always tough choices, but where to stay is easy.

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-Larry Olmsted





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The impressive quality of the iconic new automatic coffee machine is emphasized by its clear design and features an intuitive 4.3' high-resolution touchscreen color display and can even be operated from a smartphone or tablet. With two ceramic disc grinders, two pumps and two heating systems, the GIGA 6 can prepare two milk specialties simultaneously at the touch of a button.

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good life guide



Porsche Taycan

It wasn't for honeymooners that Niagara Falls was chosen as a backdrop for September's Porsche Taycan debut. The natural wonder, which generates nearly five megawatts of electric power a second, drove home a point to those who still think of battery cars as slow and quirky oddities. This was a performance vehicle capable of producing 750 horsepower from the renewable energy the falls were producing.

While the very name, Porsche, might bring to mind high-performance gasoline power, the company's founder, Ferdinand Porsche, designed one of the world's first plug-in hybrids, the Loehner-Porsche Mixte, as a young engineer more than a century ago. In fact, more recently, the company has used various forms of hybrid power in both its race and street cars, due to the discovery that electric motors deliver maximum tire-spinning torque the moment they switch on.

Two versions of the all-electric Porsche Taycan will be offered initially, both relying on twin motors, one on each axle. The base Turbo model will produce 670 hp, enough to hit 60 mph in 3.0 seconds. The 2020 Porsche Taycan Turbo S punches that up to 750 hp, and will hit 60 in just 2.6 seconds. Better yet, Porsche claims it has designed the new model to go flat out as long as it has a charge, unlike some competitors that provide a few quick bursts before overheating their motors and battery pack.

Lest you think you'll be hitchhiking home after a few laps of the local track, Taycan is expected to deliver somewhere in the range of 250 miles a charge. The Taycan will also plug into the new, 350-kilowatt Level 3 quick-chargers that offer an 80 percent charge in barely 20 minutes.

The Taycan resembles the four-door Porsche Panamera, though the goal was to give it the performance and handling of the 911 sports car. Inside, Taycan's cabin gives classic Porsche design a high-tech touch, starting with the 16.8-inch digital instrument cluster. The dashboard features several additional touchscreens, as does the center console. Taycan, meanwhile, is the first automobile that will directly stream Apple Music through its infotainment system.

When it reaches U.S. showrooms early next year, the Taycan will be the German sports car company's first all-electric model, though by no means its last. Porsche has confirmed plans for at least two other BEVs, part of a \$12 billion broadside by its parent, Volkswagen AG, which anticipates 50 green machines by middecade. The 2020 Porsche Taycan Turbo will start at \$150,900, the Turbo S at \$185,000. Fully loaded, expect to spend as much as \$241,500.

Visit porsche.com

—Paul A. Eisenstein













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Homemade Cranberry Sauce

at dawn to help my mother with her first foray on the day's feast: making cranberry sauce. If the thought of that condiment making its way around the dinner table doesn't stir salivation, you've never had cranberry sauce made right. We're not talking here about the molded mass that comes packed in a can and is often served simply dumped on a plate, the ribbed impressions of the tin still visible on the hunk of cranberry jelly, corn syrup and pectin that it held. We mean the kind made from fresh, whole berries boiled, with a combination of complimentary holiday flavors, all cradled in a serving bowl.

While, for many, a traditional vision of the big feast might be based on the gelatinous form of cranberry, that custom was not even possible before 1941, when the canned kind was introduced.

The berry's connection to Thanksgiving is based on when it is harvested (September through November), so the fresh product seems a must. The red fruit grows on bushes in a bog, which is flooded at harvest to facilitate the corralling of floating berries.

From there, you have a lot of options for what to do with them. Our favorite is to boil 12 ounces of fresh, washed berries in one cup of port wine, a half cup sugar and a quarter teaspoon of cinnamon. Reduce the heat and allow the cranberries to pop. Then add your choice of spice: three tablespoons crystalized ginger, a half teaspoon ground allspice or a quarter teaspoon nutmeg, or a combination thereof. Zest a whole orange and stir its juice into the mix. Use the zest as topping. Serves eight to 10. We're guessing you won't have leftovers.

—Jack Bettridge

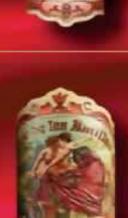






































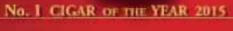
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No. I CIGAR OF THE YEAR 2012



FROM TOP: MELISSA PLANTZ; KANE SCHEIDEGGER; TINA WHATCOTT

Wagner Custom Skis

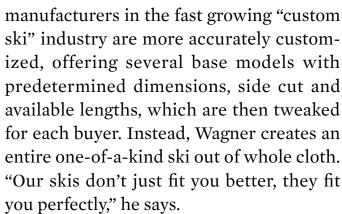
Pete Wagner was an engineer in the golf club industry at the time when technology-driven swing analysis, robotic club testing and computer-generated fitting recommendations transformed golf from off-the-rack to a highly customized sport. So when he was disappointed with a well-reviewed top brand ski and found there was no custom equivalent, Wagner invented it. Fourteen years later, Wagner Custom Skis is the world's premier bespoke brand, and has designed, built and shipped more than 15,000 pairs—no two of them the same.

Wagner takes great lengths to eliminate judgement calls and human error through data and technology. A precise questionnaire concretely measures "Skier DNA," which reflects body type, ability level, skiing style, preferred terrain, conditions, goals, your current and past equipment and more.

Then his sophisticated software spits out recommendations, and he or one of his designers goes over these with the client, suggesting material and construction options and explaining the effect of each. Your ski design will take into account whether you ski groomers or go everywhere from trees to bumps, in powder or in crud, where you live, how much you carve and how fast you like to go.

The whole thing can be done online and by phone, then the staff in his Telluride showroom goes to work, and the result, less than three weeks later, is a truly bespoke ski in every sense, from side cut to camber to length, to tip and tail style, to core, base and top materials. In sharp contrast, most





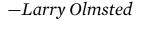
Most first-time customers choose a versatile all-mountain design, while repeat clients might assemble a quiver of two, three or four skis for a mix of powder days, firm snow, resort conditions and backcountry heli and

cat-skiing trips. Many buyers feel an immediate sense of improvement, which translates to more fun and safer skiing. As well as being designed to fit you, they are also physically better skis, more durable, better performing and made from the best state-of-the-art materials available. They are also eye candy that inspires envy among knowledgeable skiers. You choose from an array of hundreds of available graphics and colors, as well as the company's signature line of real wood veneer tops with grain patterns.

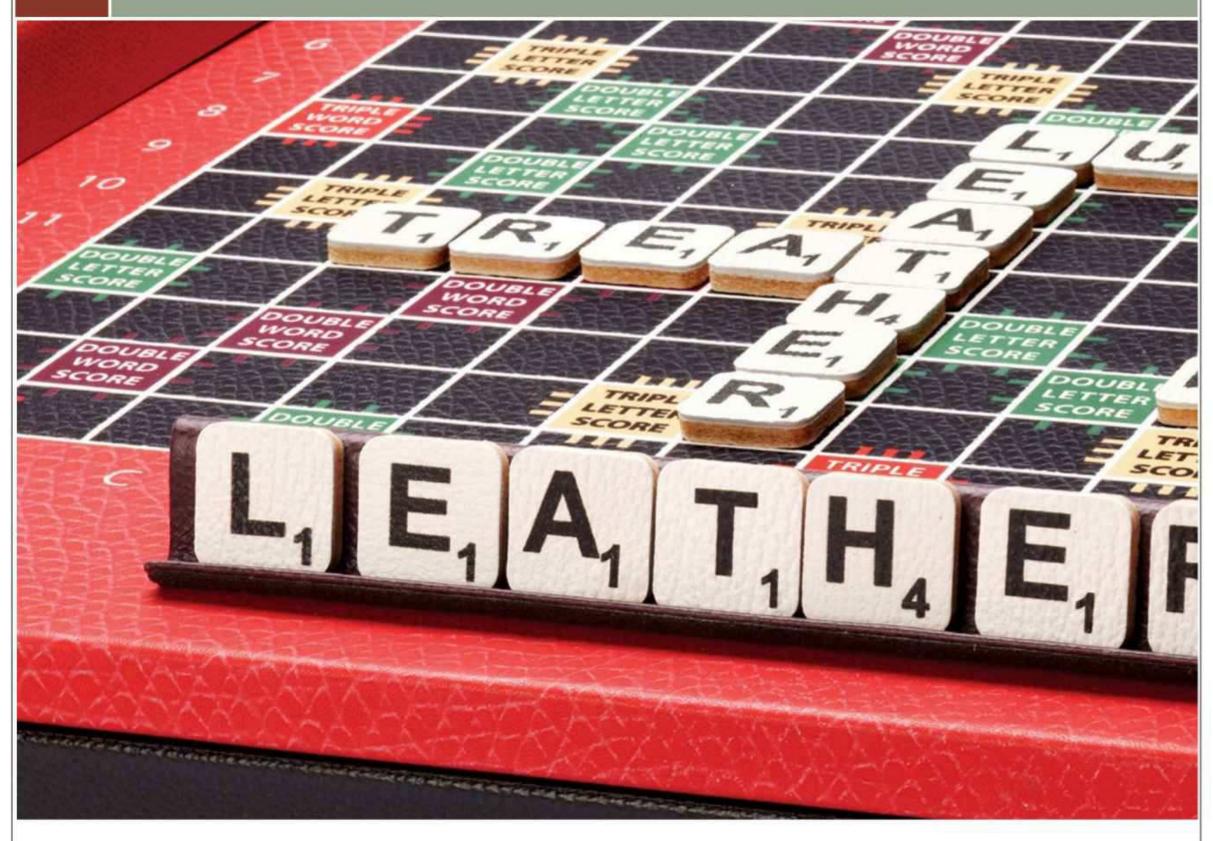
With a starting price tag of \$1,750 and an average cost of \$2,100 (before bindings), comes an unconditional guarantee to rebuild or return your money. Last winter, they made well over a thousand sets and had to do that three times.

Visit wagnerskis.com





fun good life guide



Luxe Board Games

Before electronic phone platforms lured hordes of kids to stare into their palms at lethal video games, a diversion that involved human interaction could be found in homes across America when cold weather kept people indoors. The old-school board game drew families into three-dimensional competition. Their trouble was that boards would inevitably tear apart, boxes crush and tokens and tiles lose themselves in nooks and crannies. But what if that diversion were more of a family heirloom than a pile of plastic pieces?

Aspinal of London presents Scrabble (shown, \$1,400), the classic word game of vocabulary, with letter values and bonus squares, in a deluxe edition based on leather. The hand-bound playing board sits atop an Italian-calf tray with felt lining, which neatly holds the tiles. The letter trays are also leather bound and the letters themselves have bridle-hide backing to keep them from annoyingly sliding out of place.

Those with a bent for real estate acquisition can try to corner

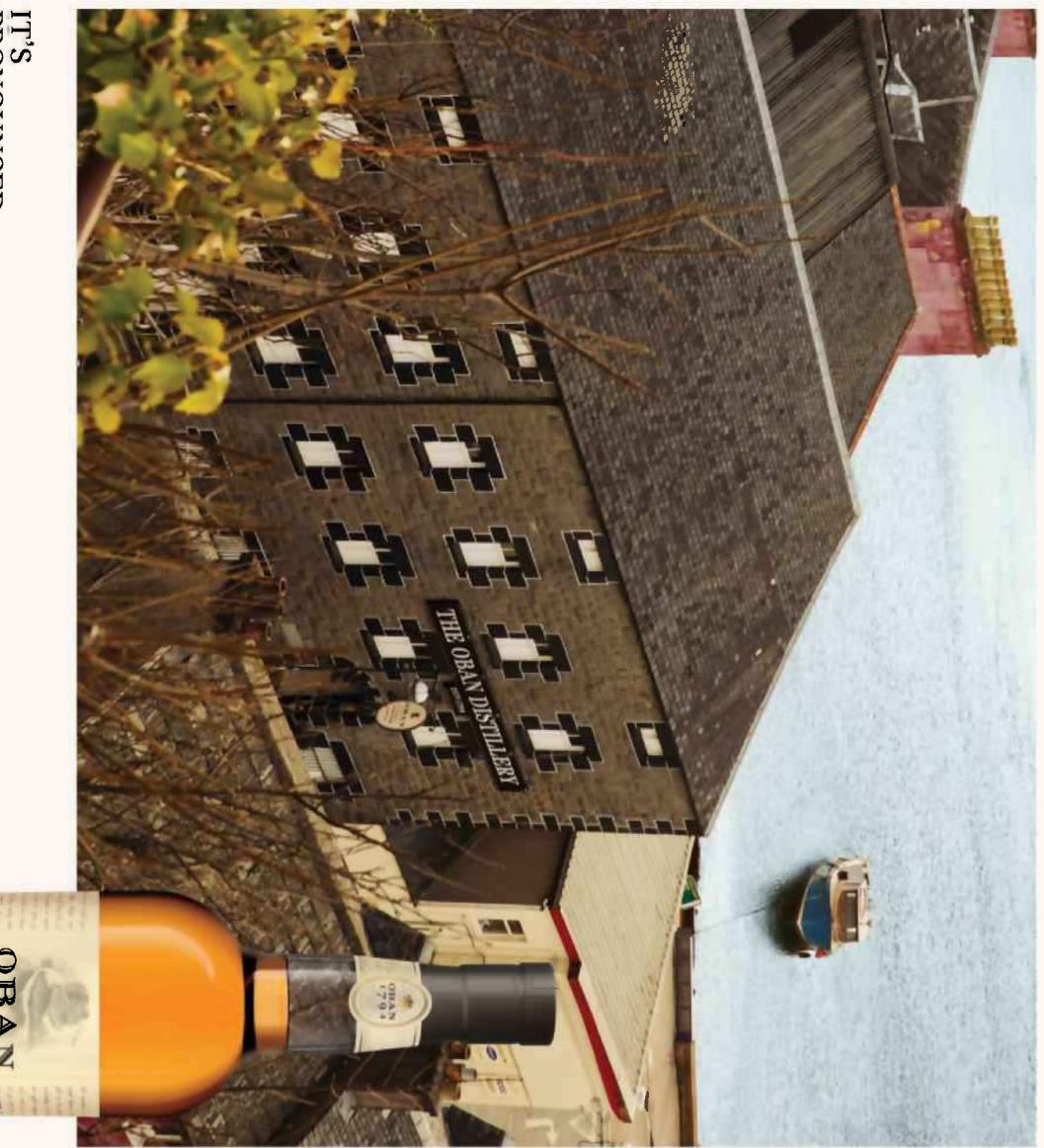
the market with the Monopoly Heirloom Edition (available at Pottery Barn, \$349). The now-famous properties of Atlantic City are painted on a board crafted in walnut, maple and rosewood inlays. Cash stays neatly in a slide-out banker's box beneath the board. The familiar property improvements—houses and hotels—are made of wood, and the Chance and Community Chest cards are foil stamped.

The British firm Linley, which specializes in game furniture (as well as standout humidors) makes a portable Backgammon game in a suitcase design, with hand-stitched leather and security locks (\$3,225). But adult customers may be drawn to the company's Vice Box (\$9,935). The box, with its walnut and sycamore marquetry depictions of playing card suits, comes with a Trafalgar whiskey decanter and tumblers and playing cards, as well as a cigar cutter and 12-cigar holder. Just saying.

Visit aspinaloflondon.com, davidlinley.com and potterybarn.com

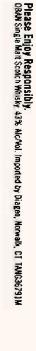
— Jack Bettridge

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OBAN







ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER RETURNS TO HIS MOST FAMOUS ROLE, PLAYING THE RELENTLESS ROBOT THAT MADE HIM A STAR

TERMINATO IS RACK

he gates are massive, perhaps 20 feet high, and they slowly swing open, revealing a sea of green grass decorated with statues. They are among the many big items in the oversized world of their owner, Arnold Schwarzenegger. He's sitting comfortably in a leather chair in the cabana behind his house in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles. Despite the heat—it's warmer than typical for September—a fire burns in the stone fireplace in the back wall of the cabana, which is open on its other three sides. He reaches to his right and picks up a torch, relighting the toasted foot of the Montecristo 80 jammed in the corner of his jutting jaw as he begins to explain the appeal of his most famous character.

BY DAVID SAVONA . PORTRAITS BY JIM WRIGHT

STYLING BY JANE ROSS • GROOMING BY JOANNEL CLEMENTE • HAIR BY CHASE HEARD



"The biggest addition to my career was *The Terminator*," he says between puffs of the Cuban. On November 1, he returns to the big screen playing the machine that was made to kill, the role that made him Hollywood royalty. *Terminator: Dark Fate* is the sixth Terminator film. The new movie will reunite Schwarzenegger with actress Linda Hamilton and James Cameron, who created the character and spearheaded the series' first two films.

But what makes audiences keep coming back? What's the appeal of a cold-blooded machine, sent back in time from a future where computers have conquered the world? "People like to be that character. They are so angry with what's going on in their lives, and in the world," says Schwarzenegger. "They want to fight back but they have no power."

Schwarzenegger recalls a scene from the first *Terminator* (released in 1984) to illustrate power. The robot has tracked its target, Sarah Connor, to a police station. The Terminator asks the desk officer where she is. "The guy says she's in interrogation, just sit over there. He doesn't even look up, he's writing. And then the Terminator just looks around," says Schwarzenegger, playing out the scene. "He thinks, 'this is breakable.' He figures it out. Then he says: 'I'll be back.'"

A few seconds go by in the film, and the calm of the police station is shattered by the Terminator smashing its car through the wall, taking out the officer who ignored him. "The guy gets pinned behind his desk. He's gone. Dead. And people are saying 'yeah, that fucking asshole, he should have been paying attention.'" Arnold laughs, holding his cigar in his left hand. "Sit on the side? Fucking Terminator doesn't sit on the side."

Alexander, one of Schwarzenegger's assistants, comes out of the house with a small plate of cookies, offering one to his boss to pair with his espresso. "Did you touch it?" Schwarzenegger asks, picking one up, his brow arched over icy blue eyes. "You're sick. Don't touch anything from this guy," he warns, taking a small bite. "He wants us to get his body fat," he says, slapping his own midsection, which looks flat. "It's getting harder and harder."

Schwarzenegger is 72, but looks a decade younger, despite the gray in his new beard. He's wearing shorts and a dark green T-shirt, and the muscles in his legs still ripple and his signature biceps—no longer the size of icebergs, as when he was the king of the bodybuilding world—still dwarf those of most normal folk. He still trains his body every day. This morning began in his usual fashion: he woke up with the news playing on his bedroom television, which he keeps on all night, scanned the *L.A. Times* to catch up on the major stories of the day, then pedaled his bike to Gold's Gym in Venice to hit the weights, pumping the world's most famous muscles full of blood. He's earned the cookie.

He's also earned the cigar. He's been smoking them for most of his life, puffing his first before he turned 20. He was 31 when he smoked his first handmade cigar, a Cuban Montecristo No. 2, and soon he was enjoying all kinds of cigars, but with an affinity for those made in Havana. He waxes poetic about the barnyard smell that you get when opening a box of good Cubans. "I always smell it," he says. "There's a certain smell of manure that a real Cuban cigar has." He smiles, then makes a deep, inhaling noise as he sniffs. "Ahhhh."

The Monte he is smoking is pretty big—6 1/2 inches long with a 55 ring gauge—but that's unusual for him now. "I used to like big cigars, but now I like smaller cigars." The size he has called his favorite is the Partagás Serie D No. 4, Cuba's most popular robusto. His humidors are filled with cigars—he says he has more than 100 designs of humidors in all—and on one of the tables in his kitchen sits a pile of various smokes from Honduras, Nicaragua and Cuba, among them Liga Privadas and CAO Flatheads. Some are in boxes, others are singles.

Schwarzenegger's house has plenty of cigars, which he doesn't collect, but smokes. He smokes a cigar a day, every day. He also shares them openly with friends. When people give Arnold gifts, that gift is often a cigar. "I've been very fortunate and been gifted a lot of different cigars I love and keep on hand," he says. He reciprocates by having an open humidor policy in Casa Schwarzenegger.

A 50-year career in film and savvy moves in real estate have put Arnold in this comfortable

"I WAS INSISTENT ON BECOMING FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO TAKE ROLES FOR FINANCIAL NEEDS."

space, with the Terminator being his most famous role. It's actually one he almost turned down. While he always wanted to be a leading man, Schwarzenegger was picky. First of all, he could afford it. Before he was making a fortune in movies (he was paid a \$30 million salary for *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, one of the

biggest in movie history) he was profiting from other lines of work. "I learned very quickly from the experts that people, a lot of times, for financial reasons, have to take on any part," he says. "As creative as Hollywood is, the other side is they are very stupid. They fall into these traps. What do you do with a muscle guy? Make him the villain. He's not the guy who saves the day, but the villain. I knew that was the danger. I was asked to play a wrestler, asked to play a football player, and asked to be on 'Hogan's Heroes,' because of the German accent."

Such roles didn't appeal to him. "I said, no matter what you do in life, you have to be a businessman. In anything, you have to know how do you turn one dollar into two." He took business



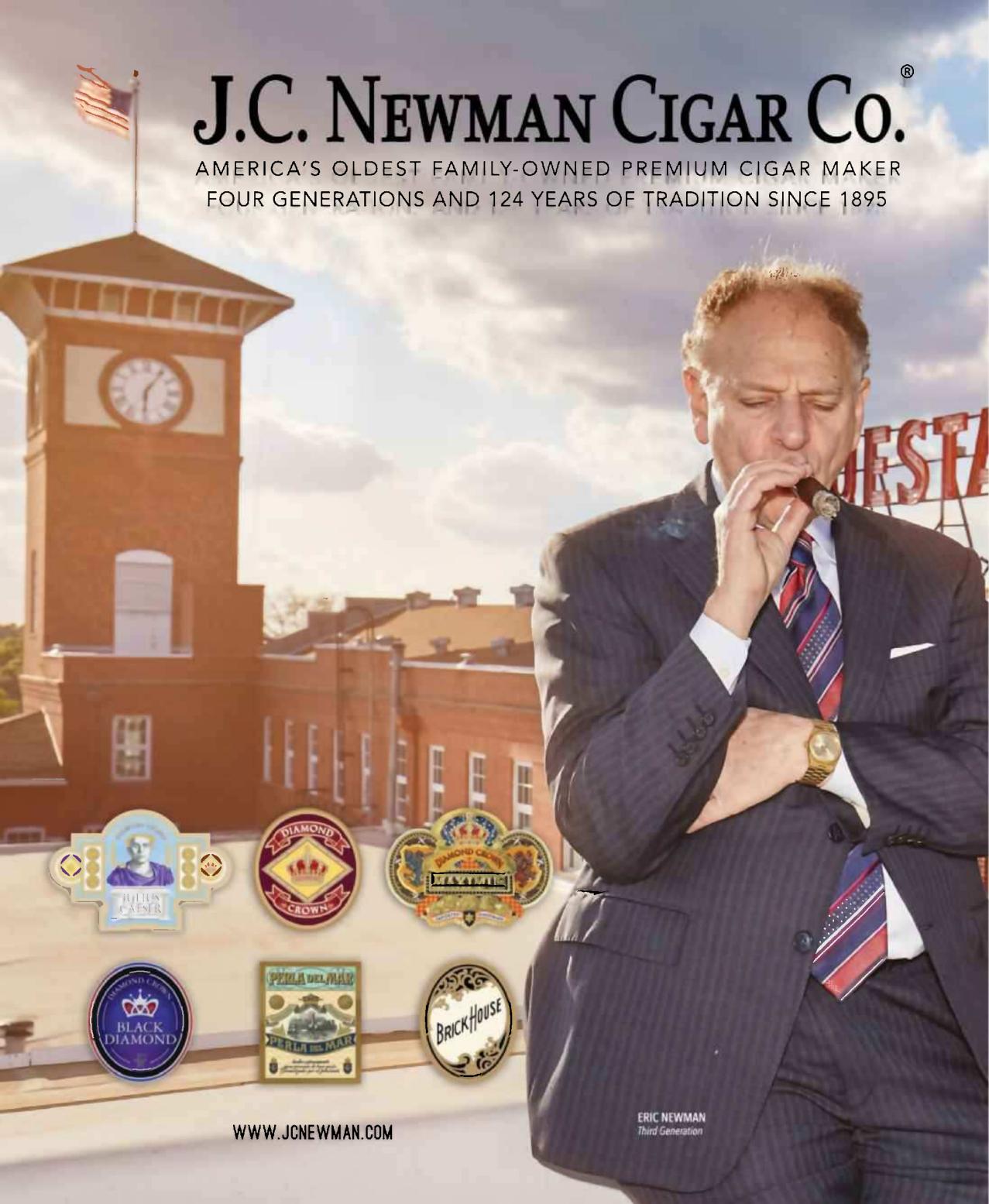


classes, started a mail-order business selling training programs and invested in California real estate. He saved \$27,000 and borrowed \$10,000 more, buying his first building, which had six units, for \$240,000. Two years later, he sold it for \$390,000. One building led to the next, and soon he had hundreds of units. "I was a millionaire way before I ever clicked in the movies. And the reason why I was insistent on becoming financially independent is this way I didn't have to take roles for financial needs."

So when he sat down for lunch with Cameron back in the 1980s, he was fresh off of playing the sword-swinging Conan the Barbarian, and looking to build on his hero image. Playing a killer

robot didn't initially appeal to him. He was originally pegged to play Kyle Reese, who tries to save Connor from the merciless machine, but over lunch Cameron shifted gears, offering Schwarzenegger the role of the robot. He sold him on the concept by explaining how the Terminator wasn't a true villain, just a machine following its mission.

Critics lauded *The Terminator*, which has a perfect 100 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. "No one expected it to get reviews like that, not even TriStar," says Schwarzenegger. "They were blown away that it was not considered like a B movie." The film also did well financially, taking in \$78 million (nearly \$200 million in









Arnold is fired up for the new film, directed by Tim Miller (far left). Linda Hamilton (left) returns as the über-tough Terminator hunter Sarah Connor.

the rights to the franchise, and wasn't involved with movies three, four and five. The Terminator bounced around from studio to studio, and the time travel plot device allowed for all manner of changes to the story. But Cameron got the rights back this year, and *Terminator: Dark Fate* ignores the last three films. "This is a continuation of the story from *Terminator* 1 and *Terminator* 2. And we're pretending the other films were a bad dream," Cameron told a *Hollywood Reporter* panel. "It's grim, it's gritty, it's fast, it's intense." He's one of the film's writers, and serves as executive producer.

The film is directed by Tim Miller, who was also behind the hit *Deadpool*. Miller raves about Schwarzenegger's appeal, which works even when he isn't playing the hero. "No matter what Arnold does, people love him," says Miller. "If he's a bad guy, people love him, and if he's a good guy, people love him." He calls Schwarzenegger "the epitome of an action hero."

The film reunites Schwarzenegger with Hamilton, reprising her role as Sarah Connor. She's a badass, a tiger mom for the apocalypse, as comfortable with a grenade launcher as a teen is

today's dollars) on a \$6 million budget. The story continued with *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, which was the biggest film of 1991, raking in \$204 million in the U.S. and more than \$500 million worldwide. Combined, the first five *Terminator* films have grossed nearly \$2 billion. All but one of them have starred Schwarzenegger. He couldn't take part in *Terminator: Salvation*, released in 2009, because he was serving as California's governor. His likeness made a brief appearance via CGI.

The Terminator tale got clouded after the second film. Cameron, who wrote and directed the first two movies, had sold



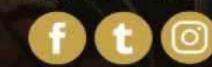
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Thirty-five years of Terminators. Arnold's original, above, Judgment Day (top left); Rise of the Machines (middle) and battling Gabriel Luna's new model of machine in Dark Fate.

with a cell phone. Her character was pursued by the Terminator in the original movie, protected by it in the sequel and seems to have forged an uneasy alliance with it in *Dark Fate*. "When this is over," she says in the trailer to Schwarzenegger, "I am going to kill you." The story picks up 27 years after Terminator 2, in which Connor and the humans seemed to finally win, preventing global nuclear war by destroying the Cyberdine computer system.

The Terminator is described as a "cybernetic organism, living tissue over a metal endoskeleton." It's remarkably resilient, but the flesh around it bleeds, and can age, and the computer that drives it is capable of learning and changing. So even though Schwarzenegger plays the same model of machine in each movie, each one has its nuances. "I think that in each of the Terminators,

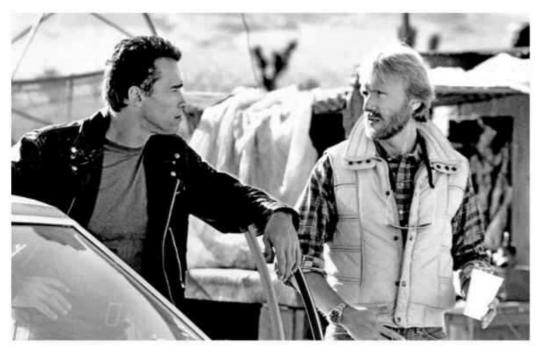
I play a little different role," he says. "The missions are different, how much I was with human beings changes my behavior."

This is also the first film between Schwarzenegger and Cameron in 25 years. The movies they make are memorable, but they don't always agree. Schwarzenegger wrote about battling with Cameron over the Terminator's oft-quoted line: "I'll be back," in his 2012 book Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story. Schwarzenegger, who was raised speaking German in his native Austria, thought it worked better as "I will be back." Cameron doesn't like his words to be changed. "Not even the punctuation," says Schwarzenegger. "He will fight for every fucking line in the movie." The line ended up becoming Schwarzenegger's most famous catch phrase, one he used in at least seven other films.

Cigars also make frequent appearances in Schwarzenegger movies. He smoked his first cigar in a German beer hall more than 50 years ago, a year before he made history by being named, at 20, the youngest person ever to be crowned Mr. Universe. There were cigars for sale. "Cigarillos, with the straws sticking out," he says. Schwarzenegger was focused on his fitness—he followed the advice from bodybuilding magazines, that warned about drinking alcohol, sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes. (The occasional beer was fine, due to its low alcohol content.) "I don't think I have even had a puff of a cigarette," he says. "But the bodybuilding magazines didn't mention cigars."

The cigarillos didn't become a habit, and he stayed clear of cigars for about a decade, being properly introduced to them

"I SAID I WANT TO BE A MOVIE STAR, I WANT TO BE A LEADING MAN, EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE SAID IT'S IMPOSSIBLE."



Arnold on the set of *Terminator 2* (above) with director James Cameron, and showing off his comedic chops in *Twins*, (right) with Danny DeVito.

when he met Sargent Shriver, the father of Maria Shriver, whom he was dating at the time. (They married in 1986; she filed for divorce in 2011.) "I'm having dinner at their house in Washington [in 1978]. After dinner, he says to me, 'Have you ever smoked a cigar?' And I said, 'yeah, little ones.'" They went downstairs, and Shriver pulled out some Montecristo No. 2 torpedos. "He told me the whole story, that this is a Cuban cigar, the best of the best, they don't sell these in this country. So I smoked with him. And the next day we smoked another one, then the next day we smoked another one."

On the set of *Conan the Barbarian*, which was filmed in Spain, Schwarzenegger smoked cigars with director John Milius, who enjoyed cigars so much he had it written into his contract that he would get two boxes every week. Milius and Schwarzenegger would take smoke breaks. "If we were setting up a shot, Milius would say, 'Bring me the cigars. Let's have one now. I think we deserve a cigar in the middle of the day." Schwarzenegger would repeat that move on other movie sets. "Then all of a sudden,

before you know it, every single scene you do in a movie, in between takes, you light up and you end up smoking three cigars a day," he says. Now he smokes one cigar a day.

Schwarzenegger broke into movies thanks to his muscles, but his sharp sense of humor helped make him stand out. One of his best-known films is the 1988 comedy *Twins*, in which he plays the unlikely brother of Danny DeVito. (The two are reuniting for a sequel called *Triplets*, bringing in Eddie Murphy as the third brother. It's scheduled for a 2020 release.) He was educated in the art of telling a joke by one of the world's best, legendary comedian Milton Berle. "We were very good friends. He was the guy who taught me about humor." Berle took Schwarzenegger under his wing, teaching him about timing, and the subtleties of the English language that made it harder for someone who grew up speaking German to tell a good joke in English.

Berle, who also smoked a heroic number of cigars throughout his long life, didn't spare his friend when roasting him at the Friar's Club. "Waiting for Arnold to win an Oscar," said Berle, "is like leaving the porch light on for Jimmy Hoffa."

Schwarzenegger and Berle would get together over cigars at Café Roma in Beverly Hills, or at one of their homes. "I would learn from him, and the more I learned, the more I was around him, the more I started to understand how humor works, and how to use the English language," Schwarzenegger says. "Because



it needs this extra five percent of understanding of the language, of the subtlety of the language. Either you get it or you don't. That's why a lot of people from overseas have a tough time telling an English joke." Schwarzenegger talks about his friend, German actor and bodybuilder Ralf Moeller. "He cannot tell an English joke," says Arnold. "Ralfie will say: 'Look, we are going to burn that bridge before we cross it.'"

Schwarzenegger, who was born in Allied-occupied Austria in 1947, overcame his

strong accent to be a movie star. He had shown a propensity for setting goals and meeting—or breaking—them from an early age, writing his reps and sets in chalk on the gym wall to note his progress. When he would set a goal, he wouldn't keep it to himself, but talk about it and write it down, to extend the challenge. "I said I want to be a movie star, I want to be a leading man, even though everyone said it's impossible. Then you follow through with the commitment," he says.

One of those goals was entering U.S. politics. "I was committed when I came over here, that I wanted to give something back to America." In earlier years, he worked with the Special Olympics, and then was chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness under the first President Bush. The longtime republican was elected California governor in 2003 during a special recall

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MARK GILLESPIE

election, and was reelected in 2006, serving until he left office in 2011. Some of his views run counter to that of his party—he's an ardent environmentalist, thinks climate change is among the greatest problems facing the United States.

"There should be not one warehouse in the United States that's not covered with solar panels. Give subsidies for it. We in California do that," he says. "America can be a good example of how you can go and lead on the environment—just like Kennedy

led with space exploration," he says. "We can show the world that you can have a successful economy, the No. 1 economy, and be No. 1 in the environment."

Schwarzenegger speaks fondly about the state that he has called home since the 1970s. "California is an extraordinary place; it always has been. It's now the fifth-largest economy in the world. Bigger than England, bigger than France or Italy." He takes a puff of the Montecristo. "California is in really good shape. That doesn't mean that we don't have flaws. Our budget system sucks, our tax system sucks and at any given time, if there is a decline economically, California could be in very deep trouble." He also feels the homeless situation in the state is a mess. "It's out

of control. Ten years ago they talked about how to get rid of [the] homeless [problem], and since then it's only increased."

He famously erected a smoking tent in the capital atrium as governor, to work around the laws prohibiting smoking in the capitol. He said democrat lawmakers would join him in the tent—some after they introduced legislation to have it taken down. When asked if that type of political hypocrisy annoys him, he shrugs it off. "Well, if you are looking at it in a very serious way, then it will

bother you. But you figure out that it's also like show business."

Even though he's the very icon of movie star cigar smokers—he's breaking his own record by appearing on our cover a fourth time—he's not opposed to certain smoking restrictions. "I myself signed a lot of anti-smoking bills. I always felt that no one else should suffer because of my smoke...If I sit somewhere outside and my smoke drifts to another table, I cannot enjoy my cigar anymore.

"I wasn't trying to protect me or cigar smokers, I was trying to protect everybody. Let's love cigar smokers, but let's also love nonsmokers. Let's figure out how to coexist. And how do you coexist? You meet in the middle."

He watches television news regularly, but switches networks. "In order to get the truth. One is to the left, one is to the right, one is a little bit close to the center, it's all over the place. If you want to really capture the feeling of what's going on, I think it's better to just flip channels every so often. I cannot take all the left-wing bullshit, and when I switch over, I can't take the right-wing bullshit either."

He doesn't enjoy smoking rooms, preferring to smoke outside. "With a passion, I hate smoking rooms," he says. He'll smoke in his Santa Monica office, about once a week, with the windows open, but his favorite place to smoke is where he is now, the cabana outside.

His friends come over and enjoy his open humidor (and open wine cellar) policy, taking cigars, lighting up and enjoying Napa Valley wine. "The policy is my stuff is always there to be shared. There's nothing that I have that I would not share. That's just the way it is," he says.

He bought the home in 2002, a spec house, and one of the many things he added was the cabana. He's comfortable here. "That's why I built this whole thing here, I want to sit in front of the fireplace, watch my TV, UFC fights or the news at night."

He takes another puff. A script sits to his side, waiting for a rehearsal. In the morning, he will repeat the ritual: news, bike, gym, cigar. When you're Arnold Schwarzenegger, life is good. ❖



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Scorsese, De Niro, Pacino and Pesci turn back the hands of time to create

The Irishman

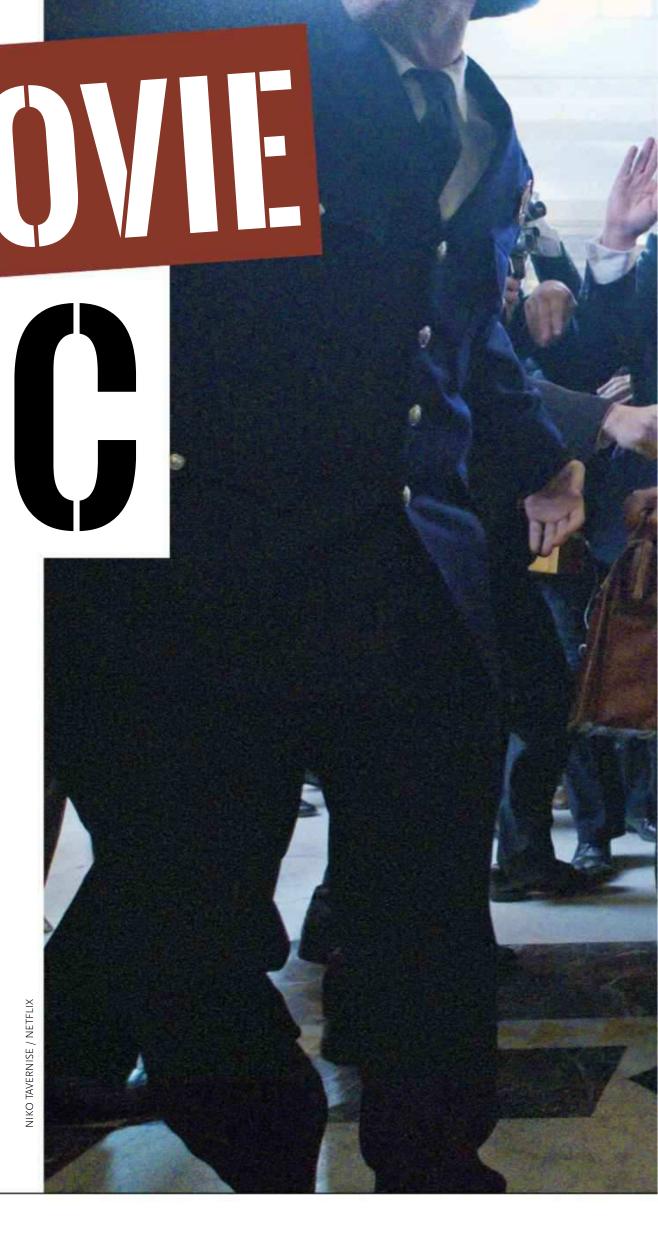
INGB WOLLS INGENIE I

BY MARSHALL FINE

HEN DID HOLLYWOOD INVENT the time machine? That's the question you may ask when the camera moves in on Robert De Niro's face as he speaks on the phone in a crucial early scene of Martin Scorsese's *The*

Irishman. What you see is not the age-weathered face of the 76-year-old actor, but the De Niro from 30 years ago—the *Goodfellas* De Niro, the *Midnight Run* De Niro. But the most anticipated film of the fall awards season didn't use science fiction, but bleeding-edge technology to create an old-school gangster epic. Given his status as one of America's greatest directors, any Scorsese film is an occasion. But this film—based on the apparent confession of the man who killed former Teamster head Jimmy Hoffa in 1975, a crime that officially has never been solved—seems to give off sparks all on its own.

The all-star cast reunites Scorsese with Joe Pesci and De Niro, and marks the director's initial collaboration with Oscarwinner Al Pacino. Collectively, the cast—which also includes Harvey Keitel, Anna Paquin and Ray Romano—has won five Oscars, five Golden Globes and seven Emmys. Between them,





director Scorsese, editor Thelma Schoonmaker, screenwriter Steve Zaillian and cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, have 25 Oscar nominations and four wins.

"When he first told me he was going to use these actors, I was thrilled, because I have a relationship with all of them," says Irwin Winkler, Scorsese's longtime producer, who counts *Rocky, Raging Bull* and *Goodfellas* among his long list of producing credits. "I've made eight films with De Niro, a couple each with Pesci and Pacino. So it was like homecoming."

The story is a multi-decade saga covering a half-century of American history, folding in the labor movement, politics and organized crime, and demands to be seen on a big screen. It's being

released by the disruptive streaming giant, Netflix, which dominated last year's Academy Award discussion with the film *Roma* while triggering controversy about whether Oscar should demand a broader theatrical presence from the films it awards.

Two factors dominated discussion of the film prior to its opening the 57th New York Film Festival in late September: the technology of movie-making that allowed Scorsese to "de-age" his three central actors so they could play characters who are decades younger in some parts of the film, and the logistics of movie presentation, specifically how long should the film play in theaters before Netflix begins streaming it? Throw in the film's 3 ½-hour running

time—Scorsese's longest, a movie longer than either of the first two *Godfathers* or any of the *Lord of the Rings* films. Audiences won't be thinking about the length once they see the film, according to one of the few who screened it prior to its festival debut.

"It's one of Scorsese's greatest films. It's that simple," says Kent Jones, New York Film Festival director and selection-committee chair. "It's completely entertaining from start to finish. You're talking about people who really know how to tell a complex story based in reality, where everything is all of a piece."

With a script adapted by Oscar-winner Zaillian (*Schindler's List*), *The Irishman* is based on Charles Brandt's 2004 book, *I Heard You Paint Houses*, which offered the confessions of Frank

Sheeran, a former Teamster official and self-confessed Mob assassin who died of cancer in 2003. The title is supposedly a direct quote, the first thing Hoffa said to Sheeran when they were introduced in the 1950s. "Painting houses" referred to the blood that spattered when Sheeran killed someone. Sheeran's reply: "I also do my own carpentry," code meaning that he also disposed of the bodies.

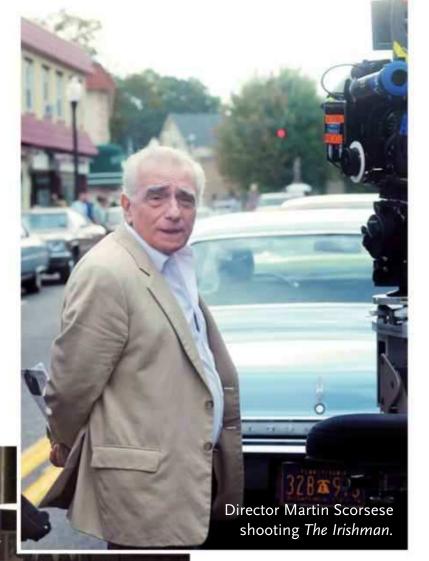
The film, set mostly in Philadelphia and Detroit, focuses on Sheeran, played by De Niro, but also gives ample time to the stories of the two men he served: Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa (played by Pacino) and mob boss Russell Bufalino (Pesci, who came out of retirement to play the role).

In the book, Sheeran, a longtime Teamster official and close friend of Hoffa, narrates his life of crime to Brandt, a former Delaware deputy attorney general who also writes crime novels. A hustler from a poor Philadelphia family, Sheeran became a proficient killer as an

infantryman in World War II, fighting his way from Sicily to the Battle of the Bulge and beyond. Part of that duty involved disposing of German prisoners as Americans fought their way north. He found that killing someone for the Mob "was just like when an officer would tell you to take a couple of German prisoners back behind the line and for you to 'hurry back,' Sheeran said in the book. "You did what you had to do."

heeran's claimed story is that of an underworld Zelig, involved in key moments in organized-crime history during the mid-20th century, among them being the lone gunman in the infamous 1972 killing of "Crazy Joey" Gallo at Umberto's Clam House in New York's Little Italy. Sheeran was a close friend of Hoffa's. According to the book—spoiler alert for those who don't want to know the story—he lured Hoffa to an empty house in a Detroit suburb and shot him twice in the back of the head. The body was cremated immediately afterward at a nearby funeral home.

The book has its critics. A slate.com article alleged that





EXCEPTIONALLY SMOOTH-ENJOY ON THE ROCKS.



DOUBLE
GOLD MEDAL
CASA NOBLE
REPOSADO TEQUILA
SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS

COMPETITION, 2019

93 POINTS

CASA NOBLE

REPOSADO TEQUILA

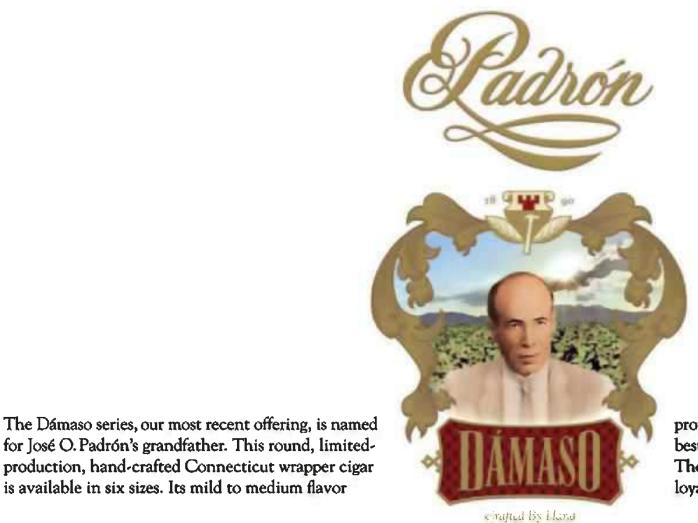
ANTHONY DIAS BLUE, 2019

PLATINUM
BEST OF CLASS
CASA NOBLE
REPOSADO TEQUILA
SIPAWARDS, 2017

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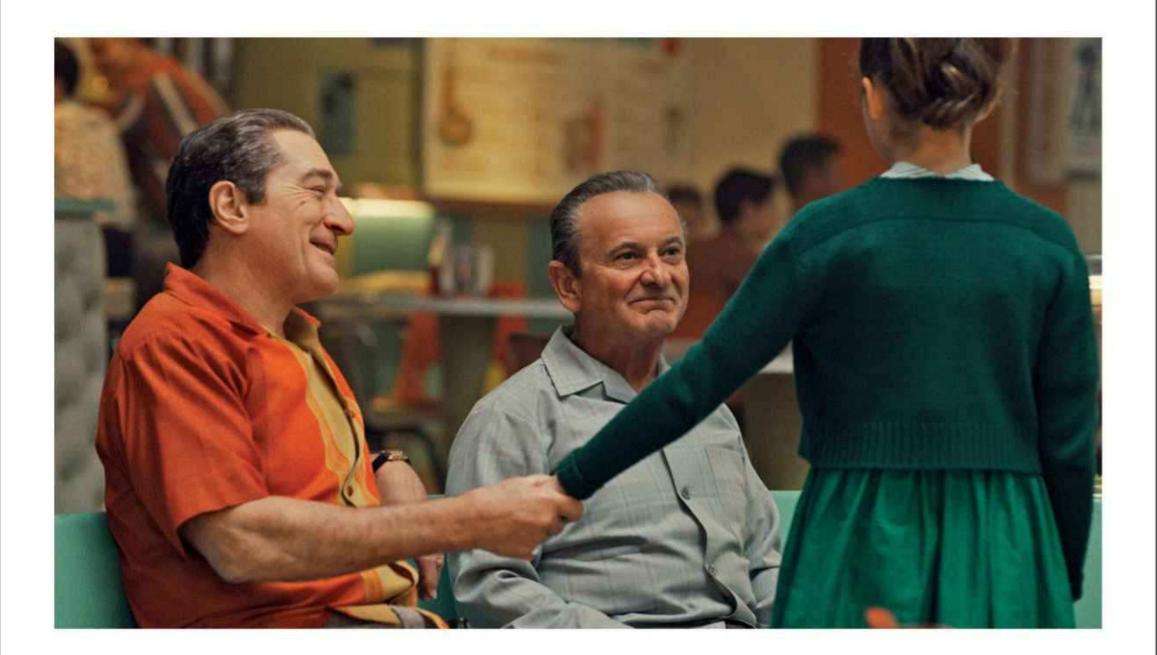
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Brandt was suckered by Sheeran, who lied about everything. Brandt's publisher, Steerforth Press, responded with an article refuting the allegations point by point, and Brandt details the confirmations of the most incendiary confessions in an afterword of the 2016 expanded paperback version of the book.

While past Scorsese films have had historical sweep, *The Irishman* brings together threads of some of the most closely watched moments in recent American history. De Niro brought the book to Scorsese shortly after its 2004 publication, but it took years for Scorsese to focus on it,

then almost 10 more years to put it all together. "To get those three actors and Scorsese to work out their schedules to get them to mesh was not easy," says Winkler. The film was initially budgeted at roughly \$100 million, and was going to be cofinanced by Paramount and Fabrica de Cine. Then Scorsese said he needed more money for the time-consuming post-production process of de-aging his actors. Pacino is 79, De Niro and Pesci are 76, and for this film they were being asked to play characters who are in their 20s in some parts of the film.

Scorsese didn't want to hire different actors to play the characters at younger ages. "Bob and Al and Joe are all in their 70s. So am I. That's where we are in our lives. Which means that we bring a certain perspective to this story that we wouldn't have had if we'd made it 10, 15, 20 years ago. So we wanted to preserve that as well," said Scorsese via an e-mail interview.

Scorsese used computers to make his central trio look decades

SCORSESE USED COMPUTERS TO MAKE HIS ACTORS LOOK DECADES YOUNGER. younger in flashbacks, a process that had been used in the past, but only briefly. Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellan were rendered younger at the opening of *X-Men: The Last Stand*, and the lines in Jeff Bridges's face were smoothed in *Tron: Legacy*, but in each of those cases, the effect was both unimpressive and noticeable. The challenge to Scorsese was to make the special effect invisible by focusing on the performances, rather than the effect.

"There are certain things you can do with makeup," he said. "You can tape the skin to make it look younger, you can apply a coating

to it that you dry out that looks like wrinkles, you can add marks and bruises and bumps. But still...aging is something else again."

The process caused the film's budget to soar, due to the amount of time taken to manipulate the image in a scene: not just the lines on the face, but the light in the eyes, and every other element in the frame, at a rate of 24 frames per second, all overseen by Scorsese, who is noted for his attention to detail. When *The Irishman's* budget jumped to roughly \$160 million, Paramount dropped out—and Netflix stepped in to finance the film.

"The idea was to go back four, maybe five decades," said De Niro at the 2018 Marrakech International Film Festival. "So Marty wanted the people at (Industrial Light & Magic) to do this as best as it's been done to this point, to make us look younger. And I was excited by that. It gave us the freedom to do scenes when we are young and not worry about makeup so much."

Actor Bobby Cannavale is 49, nearly 30 years younger than De





Niro, but he found himself playing De Niro's elder in the film. His aging was done the old fashioned way. "I was in makeup for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours to make me look older and bald, with makeup and prosthetics. Bob played it as a young man," he says. "He's such an extraordinary actor. His body language, his tone—all different when he's the younger version."

Technology will only take you so far. "The most important thing is this: technology will never do the work for you," Scorsese said. "It's a tool and you have to know how to use it. Pablo Helman and his team at ILM are remarkable, but only we could know what the movie needed. So that meant a lot of tests and a lot of watching and refining until we got it where it needed to be."

Scorsese, 76, has been a critical favorite practically from the start of his career with *Mean Streets* (1973). His stature grew with such hard-edged, groundbreaking dramas as

Taxi Driver, Raging Bull, Goodfellas and The Departed, for which he won his only Oscar as best director, out of a record eight nominations.

The son of a working-class family, Scorsese grew up an asthmatic kid in Manhattan's Little Italy, spending his time indoors as a child. Once aimed at the seminary, he instead detoured into cinema, studying at NYU before trying his hand at making independent films.

Winkler, who has been working with Scorsese since they made *Raging Bull*, which debuted in 1980, says the only challenge in working with the director "is keeping up with him." Even as he put the finishing touches on *The Irishman*, Winkler points out, Scorsese was already in preproduction for his next film, *The Killing of the Flower Moon*, set to star both De Niro and Scorsese's other acting muse, Leonardo DiCaprio.

"I've been working with him for 40 years," Winkler says. "I'm not surprised he's still as vital and talented as he is. If anything, he's more so. He's energetic."

Part of that drive comes from Scorsese's encompassing curiosity. "He's curious about absolutely everything. He sees more movies than I do—and I'm the director of a film festival," says

Jones. "As Marty points out, he comes from a family that was not a literary household. But I don't know anyone who is as widely read as Marty," Jones says. "Marty knows how to do things no one else knows."

The negotiations about the film's theatrical release made headlines of their own. Netflix and various theatrical chains butted heads about terms for an exclusive window for a bigscreen release of *The Irishman*, prior to its streaming debut on Netflix. Netflix wouldn't bow to the chains' demands of the 90-day window (though conventional wisdom says

most films run their theatrical course in 45 days or less) granted by the major studios. So the film will open November 1 in a select group of independent theaters, prior to its November 27 streaming release on Netflix. While it will expand after that into arthouse chains such as Landmark and Alamo Drafthouse, the larger chains—AMC, Regal, Cineplex—will not show the film.

In the end, says Winkler, the setting doesn't matter when it comes to telling stories people want to see. "Somewhere in their DNA, people still want to sit around the campfire and listen to stories," Winkler says. "The movie theater is the modern equivalent of that. Ultimately people like to gather around and see a film, whether it's at somebody's house or at a theater." •

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is critic-in-residence at The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham, New York.





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of the Tour

YOU KNOW TIGER, PHIL, RORY AND BROOKS. BUT WHO ARE TOMORROW'S GOLF STARS?

BY JEFF WILLIAMS





he finish to the 3M Open in early July couldn't have been a more revealing look at the way young players are taking their place on today's PGA Tour. Matthew Wolff, all of 20, and Collin Morikawa, a ripe old 22, were both fresh out of college and playing on sponsor exemptions at the 3M. They had competed against each other for years, now they were in the last group on Sunday vying for the title.

Each golfer smashed drives of 300-yards-plus on the final par 5, a 531-yard hole defended by water at

the TPC Twin Cities in Blaine, Minnesota. They followed that by lofting 5-irons toward the green, giving each of them a shot at an eagle. Wolff, calm, cool and collected, drained his 26-footer. Morikawa just missed his 23-footer

for the tie. Wolff won \$1.152 million with his first PGA victory, nipping Morikawa and Bryson DeChambeau by one stroke. It was a sign that the newest flight of bright lights in golf were ready to take their place on the big stage.

"Who could have scripted having two of the youngest kids on tour battling for it?" Hollis Cavner, 3M Open executive director, says. "We called the Tour and asked them had they ever seen this, with two sponsor's exemptions in the final group, and they said there's no way. And then the way it unfolded. Unbelievable."





Every season brings new players who were battle-hardened in the college ranks or through the Korn Ferry Tour, the training grounds for the PGA Tour. The players—most of them youngsters are ready to win from the opening tee shot, ready to compete with the Koepkas, the McIlroys, the Johnsons, the elite of professional golf. And there just might be a journeyman or two who suddenly finds the secret, the spark, the belief that translates into a win and a steady job on the Tour.

There's no question that young players coming to the Tour are ready to be there. The high school graduating class of 2011— Jordan Spieth, Justin Thomas and Xander Schauffele, among others—stormed onto the Tour and claimed its riches and fame in short order, and now find themselves playing alongside the legends like Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson. With the new wraparound season underway, CIGAR AFICIONADO takes a look at the host of new faces—as well as a couple of older ones—that are worth watching as we enter 2020. Some are proven winners, others are on the cusp of a victory, and all are eager to join the pantheon of champions who fans eagerly watch on Sunday.

Matthew Wolff

If you don't know Matthew Wolff's face by now, there's a good chance you know his swing, an extreme outside-in move with a distinct pre-shot waggle and leg kick. It makes Jim Furyk's move look textbook.

Wolff won the NCAA individual championship while playing for Oklahoma State this year after leading the school to the team championship in 2018. In his third start as a professional he won the 3M Open in Minneapolis, giving him a two-year exemption on the Tour and also getting him into the first round of the PGA Tour playoffs.

MATTHEW WOLFF

He posted a video soon after his 3M win without his signature trigger move that got his fans, known as the Wolffpack, concerned that he had abandoned his unique twist. "There's a lot of people out here that thought I wouldn't make it or thought that my swing wouldn't hold up," Wolff said. "It was kind of just a little joke to all those people. It was kind of cool to throw the world for a little spin, but I'm definitely sticking with what works and what's gotten me to this point."

Wolff is long and accurate, and deft with the putter. During the 2018 season, he had a scoring average of 68.36, the best singleseason mark in college golf history.

Collin Morikawa

Ollin Morikawa was a 19-year-old sophomore at Cal-Berkeley when he played in his first professional event, the Air Capital Classic on the Web.com Tour, and lost in a playoff. His talent and competitive prowess—he rose to the No. 1 world amateur ranking—seemed to indicate that leaving school early would be the best career move.

Instead, Morikawa decided to stick it out for four years of college, and upon graduating this spring his game had earned him a slew of sponsor exemptions. He made the cut in the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, and his second-place finish at the 3M was a harbinger of things to come. When he tied for fourth at the John Deere Classic in July, it guaranteed he would get a PGA Tour card for 2020. In his sixth start as a pro he won the

PGA Tour's Barracuda Championship. With the two-year exemption that comes with the victory, he's locked and loaded for the coming season.

"One big thing for me was having goals and putting aside expectations," Morikawa says. "I think when guys come out of college, they think they just want to beat everyone in their class. And if you beat them, that means you're one step ahead. We want to beat everyone."

Matthew NeSmith

South Carolina in 2016, Matthew NeSmith had toiled on the mini tours until he qualified for the Korn Ferry Tour last season. He had only three top 10 finishes until the Albertson's Boise Open playoff event in August. And there, he proved he was doing the right thing.

A 15-foot birdie putt on the final hole gave him a seven-under-par 64 to rally from a four-stroke deficit, edging Viktor Hovland

(more on him later) and Brandon Hagy. He pocketed \$180,000 after having earned just \$111,261 previously in his career. More importantly, he earned his PGA Tour card.

Everyone seems to hit it 300 yards off the tee, but putting always is the difference maker among the game's best players. NeSmith, who is 26, started working with putting instructors Robert Merrill and Marcus Potter and that advice paid the most handsome of dividends at Boise. "I knew with the way I was hitting it I just needed to putt a little bit better," said NeSmith, who was leading the Korn Ferry Tour in greens in regulation but was ranked 133rd in strokes-gained/putting. "Finally this week it all clicked together." He couldn't have clicked at a better time.

Corey Conners

If you had looked at Corey Conners' PGA Tour profile at the end of March, you would have seen goose eggs: zero victories. He had qualified for the Tour through the Korn Ferry Tour, and had a second- and third-place finish, but still wasn't high enough on the FedEx points list to gain direct entry into the Valero Texas Open, held the week before the Masters. So the 27-year-old took a chance on Monday qualifying, and won a six-man playoff for the final spot in the field. Then, he just happened to win the tournament—the first player in nine years to win after qualifying on Monday. That gave him not only a two-year PGA Tour exemption, but a trip to Augusta the following week.



You could call Conners a streak-player extraordinaire. He grew up in Listowel, Ontario, Canada, where he played junior hockey, but his dad was a golfer and he eventually settled on golf as a possible career. At Kent State University (which isn't a golf hotbed) he qualified for the 2014 U.S. Amateur and was runner-up to Gunn Yang. That earned him his first trip to the Masters in 2015, where he missed the cut. He turned pro right after.

This year, on the Sunday morning in San Antonio, before the final round of the Valspar, Conners and his wife were in their hotel. They had plans to fly home the next day. "My wife got the email to check in for our flight home," Conners says. "I was like, 'Don't check in for that quite yet. I've got different plans.'"

Those plans turned into a flight to Augusta, a trip so unexpected that he ran out of clothes, sending him shopping in Georgia. He shot a 70 in the opening round, and made the cut, ending up tied for 46th.

Nate Lashley

ate Lashley's victory at the Rocket Mortgage Classic in June is one of the great feel-good stories in all of sports. At the time he was the 353rd ranked player in the world and just trying to eke out a living. He was also living with a tragic history.

When Lashley was a 21-year-old junior at the University of Arizona in 2004, he was playing in the NCAA West Regional in Oregon. His parents, Charlene and Rod, along with his girlfriend, Leslie Hofmeister, came out to see him. Rod flew his Mooney M20 plane there, a four seater powered by a propeller. On the



way home to Kearney, in western Nebraska, their plane crashed near a mountain in Wyoming. It took nearly three days to find the wreckage. All had perished.

Golf is a mental game, and the challenges this tragedy presented were enormous. Lashley had been an All-American in college, but playing on the Nationwide Tour (now known as Korn Ferry) in 2006, he made only two cuts. He slid down to the mini tours and gave up the game in 2012 for a while, getting into real estate and flipping houses.

But he just couldn't quit. He qualified for the PGA Tour Latinoamérica in 2015 and the next year, he won three times on that developmental circuit. That got him a Web.com Tour card for 2017, and from there he went on to win the Corales Puntacana Resort and Club Championship in the Dominican Republic, which ultimately earned him a PGA Tour card. He didn't do much with it.

Lashley was 36, and had to qualify on Monday to get into the



-BIABLO-

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS



SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers of the Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale. Rocket Mortgage Classic. He didn't, finishing two strokes out of making the field. But he decided to hang around the tournament, and when a player withdrew on Wednesday, Lashley got in.

Remarkably, he won by six strokes—his first PGA Tour win.

He was understandably filled with emotion after the victory, likely more so than any other player. "It took me a long time to get over my parents' death," Lashley says. "Mentally, it was holding me back for a long time."

That tragedy will always be with him, but so, too, will this victory.

Cameron Champ

Cameron Champ isn't exactly a new face on Tour. He won the Sanderson Farms Championship in 2018 with an extraordinary power game that made him a TV darling until an early season back injury sent him to the sideline. When he returned, his distance couldn't make up for all the little things that go into playing winning golf. Being No. 1 on Tour in driving yardage at 317.9 yards didn't mean he was getting the ball in the hole regularly.

But boy, did he come back in late September, winning the Safeway Open in an immensely emotional victory, with his beloved grandfather "PaPa" gravely ill from stomach cancer. When he dropped the winning putt on Sunday, there were tears in his eyes by the time he picked the ball out of the hole. "I don't know if it was meant to be, but to win here, no matter if I win one more tournament, 10 more tournaments or whatever it may be, this will be the greatest win of my golfing career, for sure," said Champ. The media world latched on to the compelling story, just as they latched on to his Hollywood looks and his Herculean strength when he first won.

Back in August, when the wins weren't coming, his coach Sean Foley was asked what was going on with Champ. "What you call struggling I call growing," he said. Clearly this 24-year-old, shouldering an extremely heavy burden on the way to winning, has grown beyond his years.

Martin Trainer

Southern Cal alum Martin Trainer was born in Marseille to a French mother and an American father. He went from nowhere to Nirvana in a year, winning his first PGA Tour victory in February with a three-stroke win at the Puerto Rico Open. As an alternate event, victory there didn't come with the same benefit of other wins, but it was good enough to earn him a Tour exemption for two years.

Raised in Palo Alto and a resident of San Francisco, Trainer is a friend of NBA star Steph Curry, a pretty deft golfer who texted him right after his win. "That was pretty sweet," says Trainer. The 28-year-old golfer suffered a neck injury in May of 2019 and did not play well for the remainder of the season. But if he's healthy, look for him to stand tall again.

Viktor Hovland

nown as "The Smiling Assassin," Norway's Viktor Hovland has had his eyes on the PGA Tour prize for a long time. He's the 2018 U.S. Amateur champion at Pebble Beach, the first player from Norway to ever win the title. The 22-year-old was an All-American at Oklahoma State, and teammate of Matthew Wolff.









He became a big story at the U.S. Open in June, when he was among the early leaders and finished tied for 12th. He broke Jack Nicklaus' record by two strokes for low total score by an amateur in the U.S. Open.

That finish, plus his tie for 32nd at the Masters, produced a lot of expectation, but he still had work to do after turning pro following the Open. He fell just short on the FedEx Cup points list, but earned his Tour card by playing well during the Korn Ferry Playoffs. He did it in unusual fashion, using at least four different sets of Ping irons after signing a deal with the company following the U.S. Open. (He sometimes showed up with a different set of irons from round to round in the same tournament.) He also stands out due to his combination of accuracy and length off the tee. At Pebble Beach, he picked up 8.4 strokes off the tee. That's two more than anyone else in the field, nearly three more than Rory McIlroy and five more than Dustin Johnson and Brooks Koepka.

Dylan Frittelli

South African Dylan Frittelli won the 2012 NCAA champion-ship while playing for the University of Texas with Jordan Spieth. But unlike his teammate, fame eluded him, and he was unable to gain access to the lower tiers of PGA Tour golf. He went to Europe for awhile, and in 2017 he finally scored a win and enough high finishes to break into the top 100 in the world. That brought him to the PGA Tour.

That brings us to July and the John Deere Classic, where the six-foot-two, 29-year-old won by two strokes, earning just over \$1 million. It was the site of Spieth's first PGA Tour victory back in 2013.

Spieth and Frittelli may share a nameplate on the John Deere trophy, but that's about it. "He's probably the antithesis of me in terms of mental, I don't know what you want to call it, but mental focus," says Frittelli. If Frittelli would beat Spieth at Ping-Pong, Spieth would ask for rematch after rematch. "He wouldn't let me leave until he beat me. He has had a burning desire. I don't really have that. I'm more methodical and I'm more thoughtful in what I do."

Frittelli plays with black-rimmed eyeglasses, making him stand out in a crowd. He jokes that he and his caddy have trouble finding the ball. "He's pretty blind and I'm like half-blind," he says. "We don't know where it is."

He's proven that if you keep the ball in front of you, you can find it. If you find it in the hole enough, you win.

Maverick McNealy

ere's a player who doesn't have to make a name for himself. He's already got a pretty cool one, and there's also the distinct possibility that this 23-year-old will make that name a household word in the golf world if he lives up to his potential. His father Scott was a cofounder of Sun Microsystems, which was sold in 2010 to Oracle for \$7.4 billion. Let's just say Scott's son doesn't have as heavy a bag as so many of the sport's dreamers.

While playing at Stanford University, McNealy was a first-team All-American and the world's No. 1 ranked amateur, winning every award in college golf, including the 2017 Ben Hogan Award as the nation's best player. Not only did he follow in Tiger Woods' footsteps at Stanford, he tied Tiger with 11 individual titles, though he did this over four years and Woods left after two.

McNealy chose to blaze his own trail in the golf world even though his dad pointed out all reasons not to be a pro golfer. "Dad



is the best devil's advocate," says McNealy, who earned a PGA Tour card for the coming season through the Korn Ferry Tour playoffs. "That turned my world upside down. I thought about it really hard and I eventually decided this is still something I want to do. And my dad said, 'That's all I wanted, was for you to think hard and really make a fully thought-out decision."

Jeff Williams is a Cigar Aficionado *contributing editor.*

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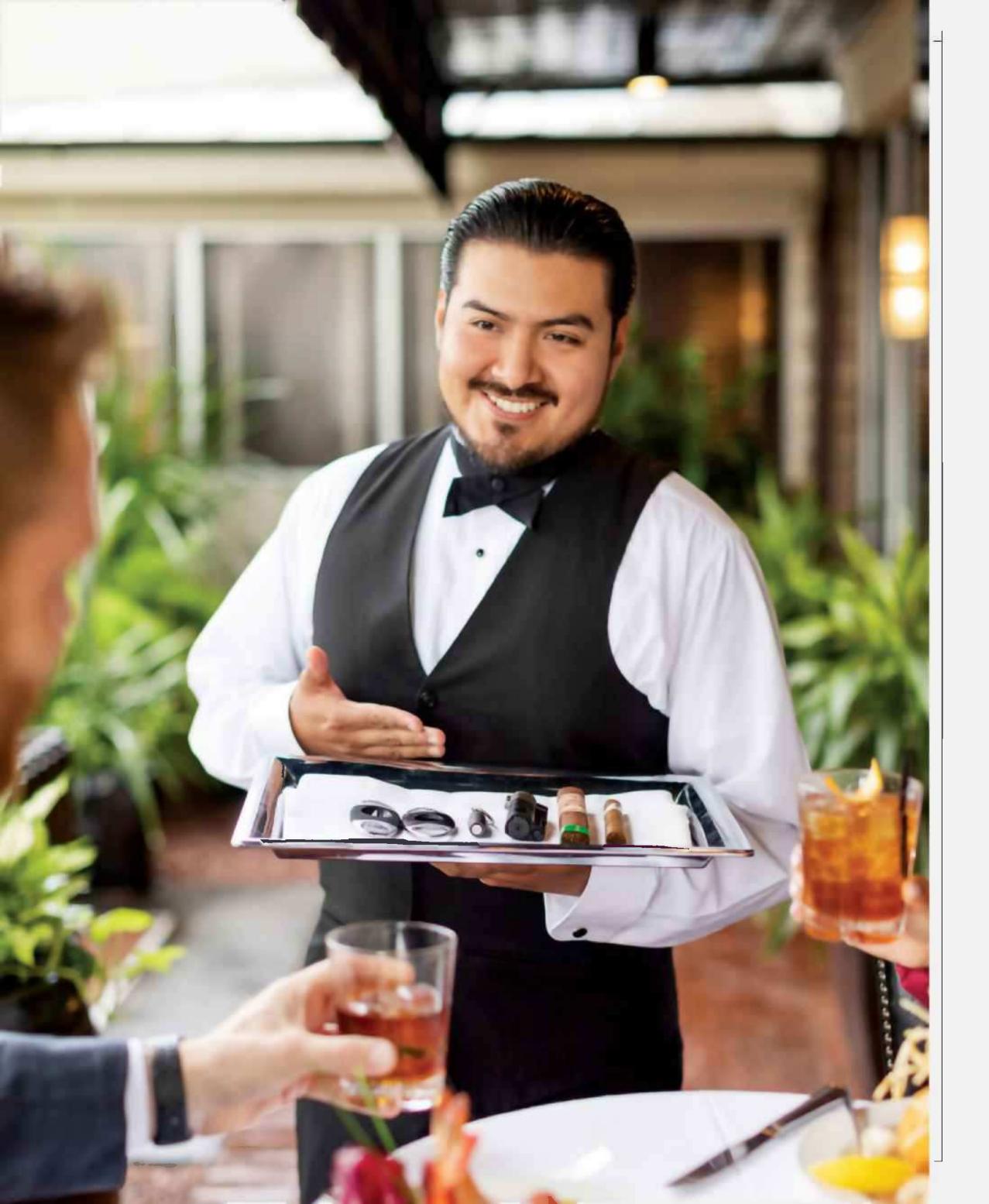
Steakhouses Cigar Lovers

Nothing pairs with great steak better than fine cigars. We found more than 30 steakhouses where you can break out a robusto after a delicious meal BY LARRY OLMSTED

he waiter in the white shirt and black vest has delivered your cocktail, a Martini so cold you think your teeth might crack as you take that first sip. You move on to the oysters, shucked and on the half shell, then slice into a massive but tender bone-in rib steak, the meat seared brown on the outside but a vibrant red medium-rare in the center. It's Prime beef—the USDA's highest grade—and has been dryaged for a month. This is an elite type of meat, something you will only find at a top-tier steakhouse.

Sated after this luxurious indulgence of beef (along with the requisite sides like creamed spinach and hash brown potatoes), you sip the last of your trophy red while perusing the after-dinner drink list. It's a near-perfect feast, but there's still one thing missing—a post-meal cigar. Many of the nation's oldest and most venerated steakhouses are in places that have become decidedly unfriendly to cigar lovers, like New York City. That's tough for those in the Big Apple, but the good news is that the rest of the United States has been enjoying a steakhouse revolution, and the classic giants have been joined by many contemporary new standouts worth a visit. There are more first-rate steakhouses than ever, and a surprising number of them offer a place for you to enjoy your cigar after, or even during, your meal. This luxurious combination of the finest red meat, red wine and brown tobacco can be found from big cities such

After feasting on thick steak at Pappas Bros.' Houston Galleria location, enjoy a cigar from its well-stocked humidor. The smokes are served in style (right) in a comfortable outdoor smoking area.



as Dallas, Washington, D.C., Miami and Las Vegas to more surprising spots like North Carolina and the Hudson Valley.

"Chefs who would have done old gourmet French restaurants aren't opening those anymore, but they *are* doing steakhouses," says Adam Platt, renowned longtime restaurant critic for *New York Magazine*. "They are serving things like duck fat fries, creamed spinach with truffles, roasted marrow bones with morels. In a weird way we are living in a Golden Age of the steakhouse."

So what makes a steakhouse great? Meat is the biggest part, but this has gotten complicated. For years, the best served Prime beef, and the very best dry aged it, concentrating richer flavor through evaporation. But while Prime means the beef is well-

marbled, it doesn't indicate breed, ranch, what the cattle was fed, and whether it was given drugs (most are). Modern steakhouses have increasingly added alternatives, such as naturally raised, drug-free cattle from a particular ranch or vendor, and common examples include Creekstone Farms, Pineland Farms, Heartland Beef, 7X and Certified Angus Beef Prime. These carefully sourced meats are showing up more often on steakhouse menus, many times with several options to choose from.

While most old-school places offer one type of beef in a choice of familiar cuts, many steakhouses today have a dizzying array of options and might have strip steaks from grassfed Colorado cattle, corn-fed steers from Nebraska, imported and domestic Wagyu (see

Marcel in Atlanta features dry-aged steaks that are grilled, then pan finished. Cigars can be enjoyed out back, in a mini-restaurant of its own.

sidebar, page 100), all on the same menu—along with "butcher's" cuts you've never heard of. Great steakhouses, old and new, offer classic starters—think French onion soup and wedge salad—plus traditional sides such as sautéed mushrooms and potatoes every way imaginable, while many add signature dishes.

This is when comfort food meets luxury dining, and it's something that's never going out of style.

Pappas Bros. Dallas and Houston

Walk inside Pappas Bros. and your eyes will be drawn to the glass counters displaying myriad thick cuts of steak, a reminder that the USDA Prime is butchered (and dry aged) in-house. This

is also one of the few top steakhouses selling purebred, domestic Akaushi Wagyu. All this great meat can be enjoyed over cigars. Pappas Bros. offers more than 60 brands and sizes, with smoking, eating and drinking allowed on comfortable outdoor patios at the Dallas and Houston Galleria locations. (The eatery in Downtown Houston is not cigar friendly.) In Dallas, high-top tables complete with white tablecloths, ashtrays and green leather chairs sit in the circular brick-and-stone cloister surrounding one end of the building. It feels like being in an Italian monastery, with each table set against a broad, wall-like column alternating with open sections, completely sheltered from the outside. In Houston, cigar-friendly tables are set alongside the exterior walls of the restaurant, but within the enclosed courtyard

surrounding a fountain by the main entrance, separated from the surrounding streets by hedgerows, wrought-iron fencing and the stone walls of the steakhouse itself. Each restaurant has the highest possible $Wine\ Spectator\ Grand\ Award\ of\ Excellence,$ with approximately 4,000 bottles at each location. You'll also find more than three dozen craft beers on tap—unrivalled in this niche—and a collectible whisky list, including such rarities as the 1946 Macallan. Pappas Bros. takes pride in making everything imaginable from scratch, from craft cocktail mixers to desserts created by a small army of pastry chefs. -L.O.

Bourbon Steak Washington, D.C.

Michael Mina was one of the first celebrity chefs to jump into the modern steakhouse game, with his global Bourbon Steak and StripSteak groups. Most feature deep whisky lists, his signature Maine lobster potpie and imported Japanese Wagyu. But the D.C. location in the Four Seasons Hotel has the most extensive cigar program, including a partnership with nearby and venerable tobacconist Georgetown Tobacco. Various cigar, wine and whisky pairings are offered, and smokers can enjoy their meal and cigar on the lush garden patio, complete with firepits, which makes it surprisingly private for an urban hotel.

Mina has developed a signature two-step process for making steak, first poaching the beef in butter, then grilling it over a wood fire, solving the age-old dilemma of capturing two coveted but often mutually exclusive red meat traits: melt-in-your mouth





tenderness and deep smoky flavor. The menu has a broad array of steaks from multiple places in Japan, plus Australia, Colorado's coveted 7X ranch and Oregon's Painted Hills Natural Beef. There's grass fed, dry aged and rarely seen cuts such as rib cap and pave. There's black truffle in the mac and cheese and soy caramel sauce drizzled over the Brussels sprouts. As the name suggests, there are more than five dozen Bourbons on the list, but also a healthy slate of Japanese whiskies to complement the Japanese meat. Mina has developed a bag full of tricks to wow diners, and here he uses them all. -L.O.

Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse Denver and Las Vegas

There are several high-end steakhouse chains in the country, but Del Frisco's stands out for its beef, an impressive selection of 45-day, dry-aged Prime and array of Wagyu from Japan, Australia and the United States. The original was in Texas, and in the spirit of everything being bigger, the signature steak is the "Double

At Bourbon Steak (above) the beef is poached in butter before grilling. Cigars are welcome on the lush garden patio. The steaks at Del Frisco's (left) are superb, and the chain has two cigar-friendly locations.

Eagle," a double bone rib eye you will likely never see elsewhere. Appetizers, sides and seafood offerings are more extensive and elaborate than most competitors.

The Las Vegas location boasts a comfortable, covered dining and cigar-friendly patio, serving around 20 selections of cigars and allowing you to have a smoke before, during and after your meal, if you so desire. The Denver location has a full-blown indoor cigar lounge, complete with masculine leather furniture and lots of rare whiskies and Ports, plus a more laid-back cigar-friendly outdoor patio with firepits. Both offer more than five dozen selections from the humidor. -L.O.

Chicago Prime Schaumburg, Illinois

The Windy City is full of great steakhouses, but they no longer serve cigars with the food. For that, you have to journey out to suburban Schaumburg, convenient to bustling O'Hare Airport. The beef here is Prime, and the owners have not forgotten that residents of Chicago, once a meatpacking epicenter, love meat in all forms, including *filet au poivre*, with a Cognac and peppercorn sauce, or Oscar, topped with crabmeat, béarnaise sauce and asparagus. There's also the chophouse classic roasted prime rib, plus interesting beef alternatives, including a 20-ounce heritage breed Berkshire Tomahawk pork chop.

Chicago Prime is family owned and attracts loyal regulars, and many bring their own smokes to the large, cigar-friendly outdoor patio, which is as close as you can get to being inside. It's covered, with gas firepits built right into the sleek, stone dining surfaces. For those not doing BYOC, they have half a dozen cigars on hand. -L.O.

Marcel Atlanta

The cigar-friendly outdoor space at Marcel is a fabulous minirestaurant of its own, hidden behind curtains, with a big fireplace and heaters. No local Atlanta chef is more revered than Ford Fry, a five-time James Beard semifinalist with nearly a dozen eateries, including the four-year-old Marcel, an old-school, fine-dining spot with whimsical flair. Named for a prominent boxer of the '30s, the food and decor are themed on the period, with high, red nail-head leather banquettes and opulent fabric wall coverings. The small humidor next to the hostess stand hints at the cigarfriendly area that awaits outside.

"When we opened, we never envisioned cigars," says sommelier Josh Ardizzoni. "But our clientele is very discerning, and they asked, so we utilized our outdoor space. Our cigar selection is curated, not overly large, but like everything we do, it's high quality."

Marcel's beef stands out: all of it is Prime from the Linz Heritage Angus ranch, renowned for its 100 percent genetically pure Black Angus cattle (most "Angus" is not) with a half century lineage. Marcel starts with exquisite meat, dry ages it, grills it over a fire of Georgia hickory, rests it, and finishes it in cast iron pans, lacquered with beef tallow, butter and garlic. They come out perfectly sear-crusted and delicious. The period menu is short but packed with surprises like bone-in filet mignon, forgotten stars such as Beef Wellington and ultra-classic appetizers such as steak tartare, escargot, oysters Bienville and bone marrow with parsley salad. -L.O.

Old Homestead Steakhouse Las Vegas

You're puffing on a fine cigar between bites of a perfectly seared rib eye when the waiter arrives with your Bourbon cocktail. It's sitting under a clear glass bell that's rigged to a handheld smoker, and after the press of a button the bell slowly fills with smoke, infusing your whiskey with a spicy, woody aroma that lingers over the dimly lit room. You're sitting in The Clubhouse At Montecristo

Patroon, New York: This high-end Manhattan restaurant, which serves

Other Steakhouse Stops For Your Cigar



Capital Grille, Scottsdale, AZ, and Naples, FL: Capital Grille in Scottsdale has a cigar-friendly patio where you can eat, drink and smoke. The Naples Capital Grille is located just a short walk from Burn by Rocky Patel, one of the world's finest cigar bars. Chamberlain's Steak and Chop House, Dallas: You can smoke and dine inside at Chamberlain's cigar lounge, which has a cigar list with more than 20 selections. **Dantanna's**, Atlanta: This very popular steak and seafood specialist in tony Buckhead has a cigar and dining lounge with a 200-square-foot-walk-in humidor. El Gaucho, Portland, OR: The Pacific

Northwest offers few indoor smoking spots, let alone those where you can also dine. El Gaucho is a steakhouse with a cigar lounge that pre-dates the law, giving it grandfather status. Hal's, Atlanta: There's a New Orleans flair to this steakhouse, which has a cigar-friendly lounge. Kirby's Prime Steakhouse in the Woodlands, **Houston:** Kirby's skips the traditional dark look for its cigar lounge, which has views of a lake. The lounge has a full bar, and offers cigars for sale. **New York Prime, Atlanta:** Cigars are welcome at the bar at this steakhouse, which features live music on a nightly basis.

steaks and other fare, has a cigar-friendly rooftop. Perry's Steakhouse & Grille, Houston: Perry's is an excellent chain with cigar-friendly patios at three of its locations in the Houston area: Memorial City, Sugar Land and Champions. Consider the "seven finger thick" pork chop, an impressive dish that is carved tableside. Peter Luger Steakhouse, Brooklyn, NY: You can no longer smoke at Luger's, but there's a cigar lounge practically next door, perfect for a post-dinner puff. **The** Ranch at Las Colinas, Dallas: This high-end steak spot has a vibrant cigar scene with a large, cigar-friendly outdoor area featuring full tables. Adirondack chairs and a long list of fine cigars for sale. Reata, Fort Worth and **Alpine, TX:** Al Micallef owns these restaurants, and he also owns Micallef Cigars, so it's not surprising that cigars are allowed on the roof (at the Fort Worth location) and on the outdoor patio (in Alpine). **Schlesingers** Steakhouse, New Windsor, NY: A rustic steakhouse in the Hudson Valley with a full-service cigar bar, allowing you to puff, drink and dine. **StripSteak by** Michael Mina, Miami Beach: This steakhouse in the Fontainebleau hotel has a small but comfortable cigar-friendly outdoor area, perfect for enjoying your after-meal smoke. There are two humidors on site with cigars for sale. .

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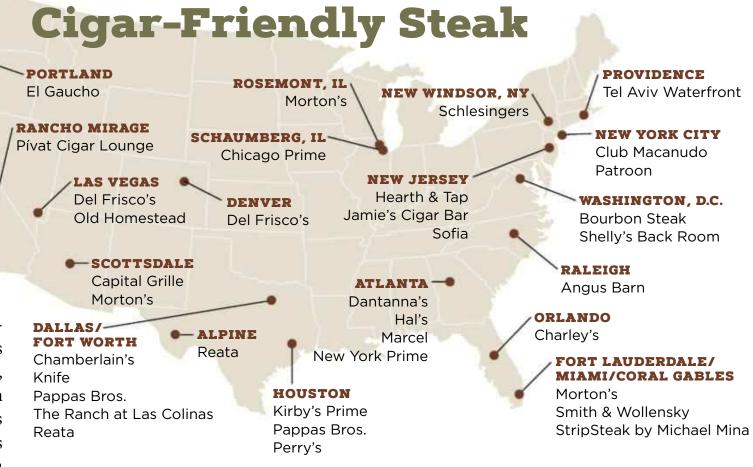


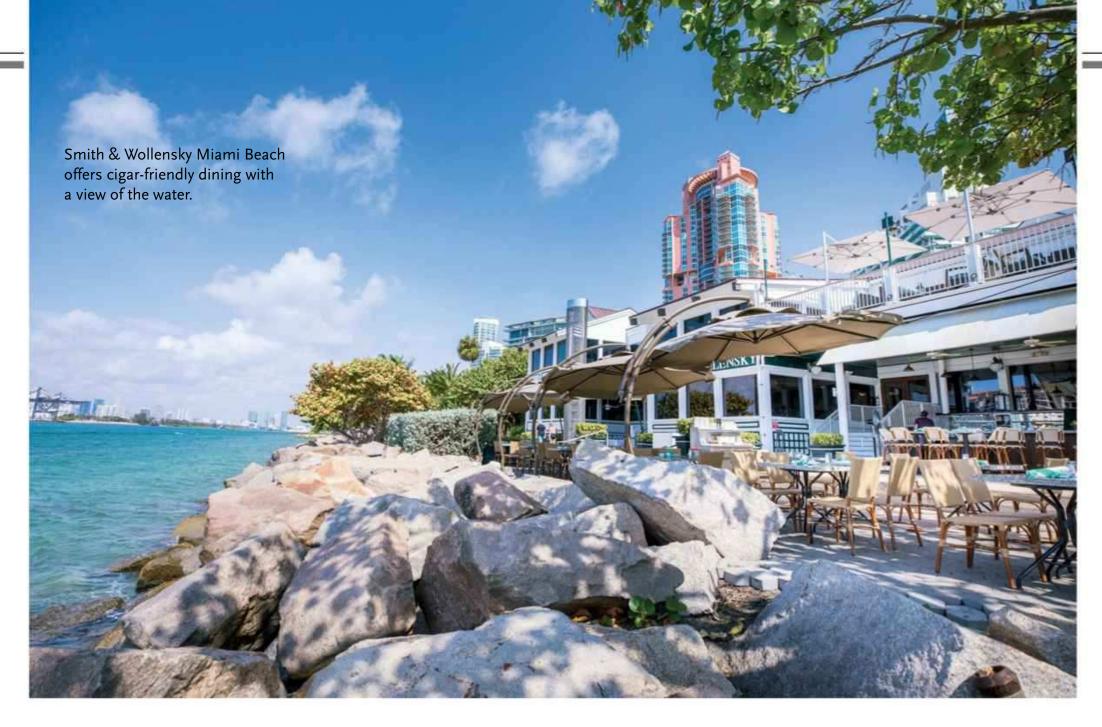
by Old Homestead, a small room tucked inside the 4,000-square-foot Montecristo Cigar Bar at Caesars Palace. The Clubhouse is a mini version of the Old Homestead steakhouse, which is right next door to the cigar bar, and it offers the aficionado the ability to light up a cigar, slice into a juicy steak and drink top-shelf spirits all at the same time, including the Rolling Smoke, the club's signature cocktail, made with that smoked Bourbon. The full menu from Old Homestead is available here, in a room that can seat 10 in privacy and comfort. —*David Clough*

don't have to seek out the pricey cuts to enjoy his steak. "You can spend a bundle here, but I'm a chef and apply chef techniques to less expensive cuts like sirloin flat, flat iron and coulotte." Eschewing tradition, he sous vides his steaks before grilling, to boost tenderness. The meat is sourced from highly regarded Texas ranches like Heartbrand Beef and 44 Farms. The look of Knife mirrors these modern techniques, with open kitchens and glassenclosed wine rack "walls." The restaurant sells cigars, and has a cigar-friendly, outdoor patio, complete with a fireplace. -L.O.

Knife Steakhouse Dallas

Knife's signature is its ultraaging program, with glass meat lockers displaying beef aged as long as 240 days, which is ancient in the steak world. "At Knife, you're gonna be able to have 30-, 45-, 60-, 90- or 240-day dry-aged steaks any day of the week," says chef John Tesar. "So if you like steak, come in and taste the differences. We're going to take you on a taste journey of meat." Tesar knows what he's talking about: before he opened Knife, he earned five stars at the Mansion on Turtle Creek and amassed four James Beard Best Chef nominations, as well as doing a stint on "Top Chef." He says you





Smith & Wollensky Miami Beach

As steakhouse chains go, it's hard to top Smith & Wollensky, which has been serving hearty cuts of beef since it opened its first location in 1977. It serves USDA Prime beef, dry aged on site. There are seven throughout the United States (the original, in New York City, is owned by a separate company) but the one where your cigar will find a happy home is in Miami Beach. Dining outdoors in southern Florida is enjoyable for most of the year, and it's hard to find a more comfortable spot than the vast outdoor area at Smith & Wollensky, which has views of the water and nearby Fisher's Island, the most

expensive zip code in Florida. Cigar smoking is allowed on the tables by the water, along with two outdoor patios, the outside bar and the upstairs deck. The menu here has a mix of the classic and the new. Choose from old standbys such as a bone-in rib eye or chateaubriand, or go for something more modern such as the Snake River Farms Swinging Tomahawk Rib Eye. When you bring out a cigar the waiter will respond with a proper cigar ashtray, and with so many in the handmade cigar industry doing business in south Florida, don't be surprised to see a cigarmaker puffing away at one of the tables nearby. —David Savona



Cigar Bars and Steak

1 hey aren't true steakhouses, but several cigar bars offer steak. Shelly's Back Room in Washington, D.C., recently improved its beef. "We upgraded our steak selections from USDA Choice to Hartley Platinum Ranch USDA Prime," says owner Bob Materazzi. Jamie's Cigar Bar in Clifton, New Jersey, serves steak, as does Hearth & Tap Co. in nearby Montvale and Sofia in Englewood. Pívat Cigar Lounge in Rancho Mirage,

California, allows smoke with its steak, as does Tel Aviv Waterfront in Providence, Rhode Island. Club Macanudo in New York offers four types of steak to pair with its serious cocktails. (And despite the name, it's open to the public.) You'll need a membership or a connected friend to sample the beef at Grand Havana Room, a cigar-friendly restaurant and lounge with locations in Beverly Hills and New York City. -D.S.





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The Angus Barn offers several places to light up while you feast and has a superb cigar selection. It's also a Wine Spectator Grand Award winner.

Angus Barn Raleigh, North Carolina

This immense and improbable restaurant looks like a barn turned roadhouse, with mismatched antiques ranging from swords to farm implements. Most prominent are a display of Colt revolvers and the world's largest collection of Wild Turkey Bourbon decanters. There's a main kitchen, another serving only those with allergies, and a third just for the private dining rooms in and around the trio of wine cellars, containing about 27,000 bottles, and displaying the *Wine Spectator* Grand Awards the restaurant has won every year since 1989.

Everything here speaks to longevity and tradition: six decades after it opened, it is owned and run by the founder's daughter, and the staff of 400-plus, many here for two, three or four decades, includes a full-time restaurant historian, oyster shuckers and trained butchers. Unlike most of their peers, the eatery focuses on second-tier USDA Choice instead of Prime, and they wet age instead of dry, so the beef is not quite over the top, but the restaurant does everything in a big way, including cigars. There's a kiosk-style, walk-in humidor by the front door, and with waits for dinner sometimes stretching to two hours, some guests enjoy

The Question of Kobe

anned in America for years, Japanese Wagyu was long nonexistent in the U.S., causing much fraud, even at fancy steakhouses. Wagyu deception and confusion remain rampant, but prized Japanese beef is now a fixture at better eateries. The easiest test is visual—if it looks like normal steak, it's not Japanese. Wagyu refers to indigenous breeds of Japanese cattle, with markedly different marbling and fat distributed evenly all throughout in tiny bands, making it almost pink. It has a butter-like, melt-in-your-mouth quality

that can be too rich for some. While only a handful of American restaurants get real Kobe, similarly stunning regional Wagyu such as Miyazaki, Sendai, Omi and Matsuzaka are more readily available. Many steakhouses also offer domestic "Wagyu," Japanese cattle crossbred with Western breeds for a steak more marbled than Prime, but less overpowering than the imports. Japanese beef with bones remains illegal stateside, so to get a Wagyu Tomahawk in America you have to go domestic or Australian.

-L.O.







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a pre-meal smoke on the large front porch that has both covered and uncovered sections. But to smoke while eating, walk through the hidden door that takes you to The Meat Locker, an actual steel, commercial walk-in freezer that is now an open-air smoking lounge created to work with anti-smoking laws. The entire space is within a private outdoor courtyard with an odd British Pub meets speakeasy theme, and it serves the full menu. A full-time cigar steward can help you find something from the list, which has just about every major brand represented, including a custom Angus Barn model and rarities such as Fuente Fuente OpusX Power of the Dream and Padrón Family Reserves. -L.O.

Morton's The Steakhouse

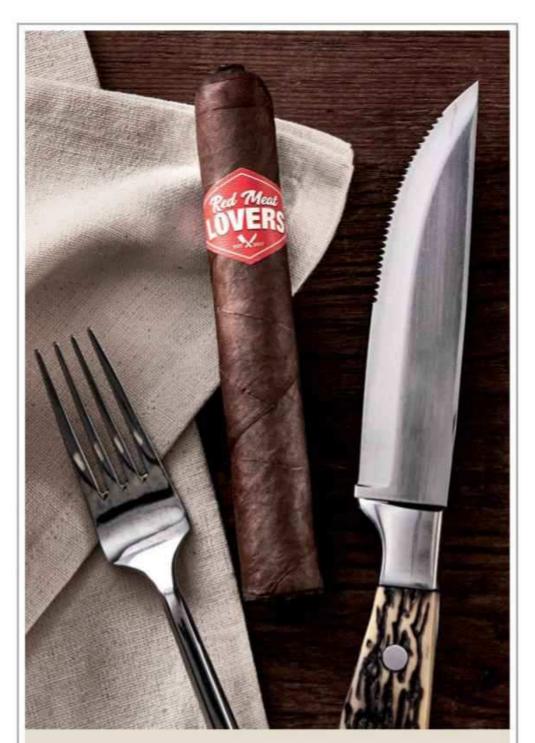
Various Locations

Of the big, high-end national steakhouse chains, Morton's is the most cigar friendly, with five locales welcoming smokers. The first Morton's opened in 1978, and each location plays it safe in terms of the classic steakhouse menu, with USDA Prime in familiar cuts, with about the most daring take being the Cajun-seasoned rib eye. Morton's makes up for its predictability with reliable consistency, making it a go-to choice for steak lovers on the road. All 70 locations feature a minimum of 200 (and as many as 500) wines. The cigar-friendly locations all sell cigars and have outdoor dining patios, the most famous of which is in downtown Washington, D.C., a favorite of politicians and lobbyists, with its cigar patio overlooking the heart of the K Street corridor of power and influence. While there are a few actual outside tables, the bulk of the vast patio is weather protected by plastic walls and a ceiling and is split into areas with regular restaurant tables and couch seating around lower tables.

Morton's in Scottsdale, Arizona, has a large, covered Southerninspired verandah for your cigar, complete with regular tables, faux-wicker chairs and (rarely needed) gas heaters. In Coral Gables, Florida, Morton's sits in the middle of a downtown block and has its outdoor seating behind towering columns under the portico of its pink building, just off the sidewalk with an Old Havana flair. In Fort Lauderdale, the restaurant has a much more modern look, anchoring the street-level corner of an office building with outdoor seating under canvas umbrellas on either side of the restaurant, separated from the lightly trafficked sidewalk by high hedges. The Morton's in Rosemont, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, has a large, stone patio in the back, with plentiful regular tables enclosed by wrought iron railings. The patio is surrounded by extensive landscaping and has a surprisingly escapist feel. -L.O.

Charley's Steak House Orlando, Florida

Orlando can be a dining desert, with mediocrity on too many menus, but the Charley's Steak House on International Drive is worthy of your attention. The steaks here are very good, if not world-class. Wet aged, rather than dry, they are seared over mesquite and oak on a large, circular grill. But what makes this a must-stop for the cigar lover is the restaurant's covered cigar patio, which has several tables, some couches and its own bar. The restaurant has a small selection of cigars available for sale, makes a mean Martini and throws out the welcome mat for those who like to smoke while they feast on beef. -D.S.



The Red Meat Lovers Club

oing up the creaky steps to the second floor of Peter Luger Steak House in Brooklyn, you can smell a century's worth of roasting rib eyes and spilled beer as the greasy floorboards exude the dry-aged aroma of history. You sit at a long table, and the food begins to arrive by waiters in white aprons: thick-sliced bacon, lamb chops, a Porterhouse, rib steaks. You are dining with the Red Meat Lovers Club, a group of ardent carnivores from around the country who gather for monthly, meat-centric cigar dinners to raise money for various charities such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation

and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. There are 1,700 members, and the fundraisers, which are organized by club founder Evan Darnell, take place all over the United States. Every meal involves meat, most are centered around steak, but every event includes an auction and cigars. If the venue is not cigar friendly, then everyone relocates for a smoke somewhere close by. In 2018, the club raised \$100,000. This year, they hope to double that. "The club is more than just meat," Darnell says. "It's incorporating beef, cigars, business networking and philanthropy into one solid evening of epicness."

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Exploring the exquisite expressions that secure Cognac's place as the world's foremost brandy

BY JACK BETTRIDGE PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

ntering the underground sanctum known as the Chai du Fondateur, or Founder's Cellar, at Cognac giant Hennessy, makes a visitor feel as if he has opened a door on a long-closed vault, or a room where Indiana Jones might explore, whip in hand. For here, in a dank space not far from the Charente River in France, are ancient casks, chalk-marked with dates from well over 100 years ago.

COURVOISIER

Three of Cognac's finest. From left, Louis XIII Black Pearl, L'Essence de Courvoisier,

and Hennessy Paradis Impérial.

Dust sits on the containers, which sleep in the shadows of cobwebs. Other nooks hold demijohns—six-gallon glass vessels enveloped in wicker—of even older liquid.

This is the place where the Cognac maker keeps its best stores of *eaux de vie*, the wine-based distillates that will be married to create Cognac, the world's best-known brandy. Taken as whole, Hennessy is a spirits maker that sprawls throughout France's Cognac region, tying together a system of grape growers, distillers, coopers and warehousers who create much of the world's supply of the cherished brandy that is named for the area. It recently opened its Founder's Cellar to limited tours—only two visitors can attend at a time. The restriction is an important one



Courvoisier grows some of its grapes on its own estate (above), but like most Cognac makers, it also uses wines from the area's private growers.

as guests will want to focus their attention and palates on the drinks at hand, beginning with a sampling of eaux de vie and building to the tasting's culminating tour de force: Paradis Impérial, an inspired marriage of the company's most precious Cognac that fetches a price of \$3,000 a bottle.

Cognac is often called a blender's art, uniting a spectrum of singular examples to finesse a complex whole. Hennessy judges Paradis Impérial to be the height of that art, made with the company's top eaux de vie (one in a thousand make the cut) and then melded with another 100 or so of its ilk. The expression doesn't disappoint. What follows is a multifaceted flavor journey that wends through subtle flowers to exotic fruits and citrus and on to spices, nuts, cheese and herbs, and then finishes for hours.

Welcome to the top tier of Cognac, a place of enjoyment that is well worth exploring. Even while the region is a lovely pastoral expanse of vineyards, not too far from Bordeaux, the process of crafting Cognac can seem a little mechanized, with spirits being pumped in pipes from container to container. But many makers maintain these cellars—sometimes called a paradis—that immediately dispel that notion. Modern concerns are abandoned as casks are allowed to remain undisturbed until they offer up their gifts. Industrial neatness is no longer an issue. Cobwebs can grow to the thickness of ropes. It is here that Cognac makers flex their considerable blending muscles to show just why this storied spirit is so revered. With this sort of exclusivity not only comes high price tags. It's a rarity to see some examples released in batches of more than a few hundred bottles.

If your previous experience with Cognac has been limited to such entry-level spirits as VS (minimum two years maturation) or VSOP (minimum four years) prepare to be blown away. Even if you swim in the deep ends of Napoleon (aged at least six years)

The Quest for the Best Tasting Eight of Cognac's Best Expressions

Camus Extra Elegance, \$450

This beyond XO Camus has been popular in Asia for years, but it didn't reach the United States market until earlier in this decade. While it contains eaux de vie from Cognac's Grande and Petite Champagne regions, it also has wine grown in the Borderies cru, keeping up the Camus tradition of championing Cognac's smallest region. A spicy nose, with nutmeg, ginger and cinnamon, welcomes sweet cherry and raisin bread on the palate. Cinnamon lingers on the long finish.

Hardy L'Été, \$16,000

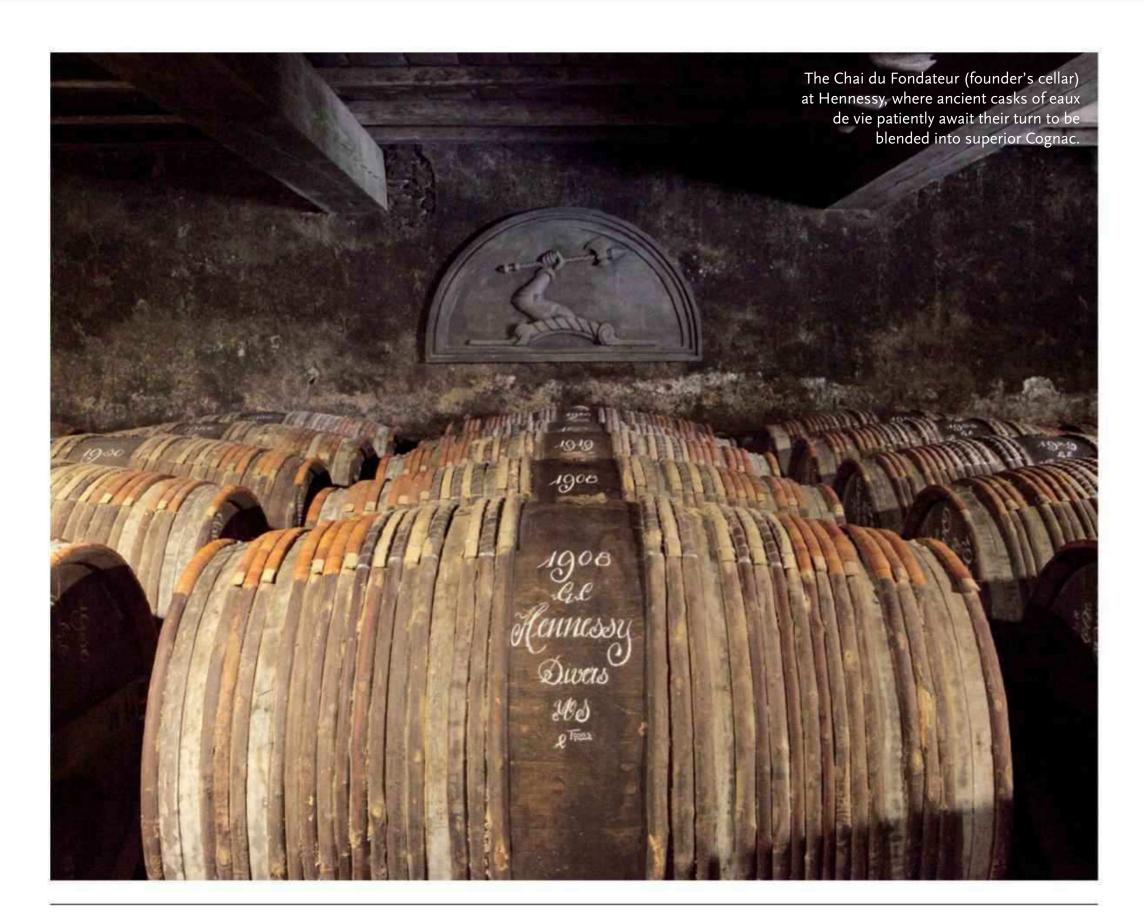
Hardy is known to be the height of expense in Cognac, and the above price may have you gasping already. But built into the tariff is the spectacular Lalique crystal vessel that the firm creates for its seasonal releases. limited to a mere 400 bottles. We tasted the spring (Le Printemps) and summer (L'Été) versions, and were left champing at the bit in expectation of fall (L'Automne). The latter of the two presents a nose of cinnamon and sugar toast with a hint of perfume. In the mouth, it melts out serious hard candy notes with orange, cherry and mango. The long finish brings on sweet licorice.

Hennessy Paradis Impérial, \$3,000

This is an even more elevated version of the Cognac first introduced as Paradis, and already a superb liquid at \$900 (can that price be described as entry level?). Despite achieving what some might term perfection, Hennessy dug deeper into its stocks (the paradis) to unearth this gem in 2014. From nose to final nip it unleashes a flow of flavors that never give in, starting with a bouquet of flowers, dried fruit and citrus, toffee and vanilla. On the palate are tangerine, crème brûlée, caramel, anise and passion fruit as well as woodiness. A forever finish.

L'Artisan No. 50, \$1,500

L'Artisan is one of the brilliant finds of Nicholas Palazzi of PM spirits, who makes it his business to find casks that might otherwise go unnoticed in the cellars of France. His range spreads beyond Cognac to Armagnac, as well as the apple brandy of northern France, called Calvados. This example was distilled in 1950 from a single cask culled from the Grande Champagne cru of Cognac, and was bottled unfiltered and uncut. It's not a blend, yet it screams with complexity while remaining elegant. You'll find notes of rich berries, ginger, orange, flowers, cocoa and hard candy.



L'Essence de Courvoisier, \$3,000

Hip-hop artists may have put their stamp on the Courvoisier brand with the line "Pass the Courvoisier," but this extremely high-end example of the brand is one you don't dole out freely at parties. We recommend you hide it away, to contemplate in silence. Born as a limited release in 2009, L'Essence now occupies a regular place in the Courvoisier lineup. Melded from more than 100 eaux de vie from Grande Champagne and Borderies, this Cognac delivers honey, caramel, flowers, anise and cinnamon. The finish is extraordinarily long.

Louis XIII by Rémy Martin, \$3,500

You've likely seen this majestic bottle glowing down from the very top shelf of toney bars. Although it was introduced in the late 19th century, the name honors the 17th-century king who first recognized Cognac as its own brandy region. A recent Black Pearl version (shown on first page) goes for \$13,000 for a half bottle, but those who slum it with the \$3,500 version still get an impossibly complex mix of flavors that include dried flowers, saffron, leather, nuts, mushrooms, honey, citrus fruits, nutmeg and ginger. There's even a hint of cigar tobacco, which should pique your interest in pairing it with a fine cigar.

Pierre Ferrand Cognac Sélection des Anges, \$150

This single-estate Grand Champagne Cognac achieves its complexity by storing casks in a range of different conditions based on temperature and humidity. The name comes from the idea that what is left in the vessels after 30 to 50 years of evaporation—the lost liquid is known as the angel's share—is what the spiritual attendants have selected for our enjoyment. It carries a finessed range of honey, fruit, spices and wood. Apples and pears meet slight citrus notes, and mingle with cigar tobacco, cedar and leather.

Plume Frapin, \$3,500

It was 1270 when the Frapins began growing grapes on a family estate, which includes its own castle. This limited-release, which was introduced in September, contains only grapes from the Grande Champagne region on which the property is located, as with all Frapin's expressions. The container includes an 18-karat, rose-gold stopper. Along with candied fruits, licorice and cinnamon, it achieves a woodiness as the prized *rancio*. The latter brings mushrooms, mustiness and a cigar-box quality.





Glass Warfare

Thless you make it a practice to attend connoisseur-level tastings regularly (and there's nothing wrong with that), the glass you've most likely used to sip Cognac is the classic snifter. Images of this large, balloon glass are ubiquitous in movies and on television, usually in scenes with gentlemen in tailcoats repairing to the smoking den for after-dinner drinks and cigars. But in recent decades, a rebellion of sorts has fomented among cognoscenti that supports a diminutive vessel, often called a tulip glass.

Each side in the controversy has its proponents. Beyond simply bowing to tradition, the snifter sipper can point to the comfortable way the balloon balances in the ball of the hand. The short stem slides between the finger and the ball rests securely in the palm. It's also been posited that the way the glass is grasped also served to warm the spirit inside, in the days of old when indoor heating was spotty. The name itself also suggests the opportunity to sniff the Cognac, as the nose can dip within its capacious brim.

Some of those same contentions—turned around—can be arguments used by the tulip tippler. The novel shape, with its wide bowl tapering to a slim opening, funnels the aroma to the nose, allowing appreciation of the bouquet without overwhelming the senses with clouds of alcohol evaporating off a lake of brandy below. The chimney effect lets you sip away without being overcome. The stem of this Riedel Vinum glass, from the modern innovator in drinking vessels, also lets you hold the glass without unduly warming the liquid. You do pay your fuel bills, don't you?

Try them both and decide your preference, but please avoid the jelly jar. -J.B.

and XO (10 years), these top-level expressions, which are often aged in the 30- to 50-year realm, will astound you.

The bureau that oversees Cognac production has no official classification for brandy over 10 years old, but a few phrases indicate exceptional maturation, terms like "family" and "old reserve" (*vieille réserve*) as well as "beyond age" (*hors d'age*).

In a sense, the four biggest houses, Courvoisier, Hennessy, Martell and Rémy Martin, which collectively produce about 90 percent of the world's Cognac, have a head start on creating a wow factor. They easily outstrip the smaller concerns with their enormous stocks and ability to keep eaux de vie on reserve for a century and more. Certainly, Rémy Martin's Louis XIII is known even beyond the Cognac world as a hyper-premium marque. But smaller, family-run houses often have had the longevity in this region that thrives on tradition to have collected old reserves that allow for special releases, if not on a regular basis, at least periodically.

Furthermore, age is not the only factor that distinguishes a great Cognac from the run-of-the-mill quaffs that are best enjoyed with mixers rather than as something to sip and savor with a fine cigar. Within the Cognac region are six growing areas, or *crus*: Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Borderies, Fin Bois, Bon Bois and Bois Ordinaires. Each brings its own distinctive traits, but some are more valued than others. The two Champagne crus (nothing to do with France's sparkling wine) are traditionally most highly cherished, and the brandies that contain only those are designated Fine Champagne. Some houses, such as Rémy, cleave only to the Grande Champagne cru, with its chalky soil. However, other crus, especially Borderies, are becoming esteemed and sometimes used exclusively in particular Cognacs to showcase other qualities.

Another point of departure is to bottle Cognacs that represent the product of only one year. These vintage brandies, such as some of the Hine expressions, are distinct because the grapes that make

Cognac is often called a blender's art, uniting a spectrum of singular examples to finesse a complex whole.

up their raw material vary in taste from year to year. A vintage Cognac will capture a picture of the weather when the grapes were born. The epitome of isolating Cognac to very few influences is to abandon the blending dictum altogether and bottle a Cognac that comes from a single cask. The liquor négociant PM Spirits does this by procuring casks from local growers who sometimes ferment, distill and age some of their own crops to later sell to blenders. The firm's founder spends much of his time haunting the barns and cellars of farmers who double as craft distillers, looking for the casks that have escaped the notice of the greater Cognac combines. Some of these are such standouts that the company decides they deserve to stand on their own. The results can be noble, but also can't be replicated. Enjoy them while they're here. When they're gone, they're gone. ❖

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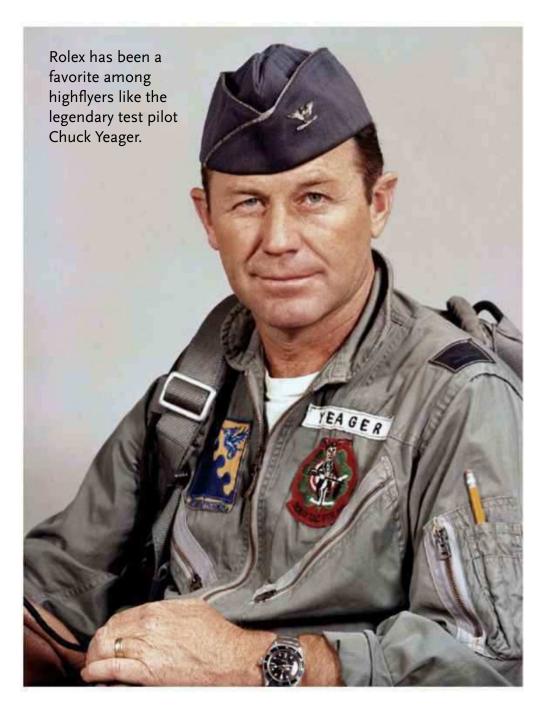
Please Drink Responsibly.

Pilot watches earn their wings through function and a flair for stylistic history

he most significant pilot's watch in history wasn't a pilot's watch—or at least not what we'd think of as one today. While technically qualifying (because it was made for a pilot), the Cartier Santos lacked the features commonly associated with the category. In 1904, the year after the Wright brothers' first flight, the Brazilian aviator, adventurer and bon vivant of Paris society, Alberto Santos-Dumont asked his friend Louis Cartier to create a watch that he could read on his wrist—instead of reaching for a pocket watch—while he flew his aircraft. Cartier delivered the square Santos featuring the brand's now signature Roman numerals. It would be decades before aviators carried bells and whistles like slide rules or multiple time zones on their wrists.

In fact, it was as a wristwatch (not as a pilot's tool) that the Santos caused its biggest stir. In 1911, the *maison* partnered with a forerunner of Jaeger-LeCoultre to produce watches with wrist straps for public consumption, and sleek, modern timekeepers for men soon dominated old-fashioned pocket watches. Still, the Santos established the pilot category, which has evolved in functionality and design ever since. The spectrum of pilot watches on the market today contains almost a timeline of its evolution from retro editions to the advance guard of design.





Following last year's revamp of its modern Santos, Cartier expanded the collection with a variety of new designs including six new chronographs ranging in price from \$8,950 to \$24,700 and powered by a modified 1904-CH MC caliber that moves the start and stop button to 9 O'CLOCK, across from the crown, which features an integrated reset function.

What early pilot watches lacked in technical extras, they made up for with rugged reliability and optimal legibility. They came in large sizes, often with black dials contrasted with white glow-in-the-dark Arabic numerals. The masculine, no-frills styling still resonates with modern watch enthusiasts. "Today, there is a huge trend for anything large, steel and sporty," says Alexandre Ghotbi, a watch sales specialist at Phillips auction house in Geneva. "All these chronos from the '50s, '60s and '70s by Rolex, Omega, Longines and others are doing really well in the auction market."

Other brands are referencing the dawn of flight. Zenith's aviation heritage traces to 1909, when Louis Blériot flew across the English Channel with a Zenith watch. This year, the brand marks the 110th anniversary of that flight with the 45mm Pilot Type 20 Extra Special Silver (\$7,700), a 200-piece limited edition in silver with a brushed silver dial stamped with a rivet pattern.

Patek Philippe's vintage-inspired Calatrava Pilot range added the 42.2-mm 5520P Alarm Travel Time (\$226,810) boasting a new integrated striking movement with an alarm using a hammer-andgong system. The unconventional design has three pushers plus a crown for setting home and local time as well as the alarm. Pioneering aviators decked out in leather, goggles and flowing white scarves conjured a romantic sense of adventure and derring-do. But during World War I, a reliably accurate pilot's wristwatch became vital military gear that made the difference between life and death.

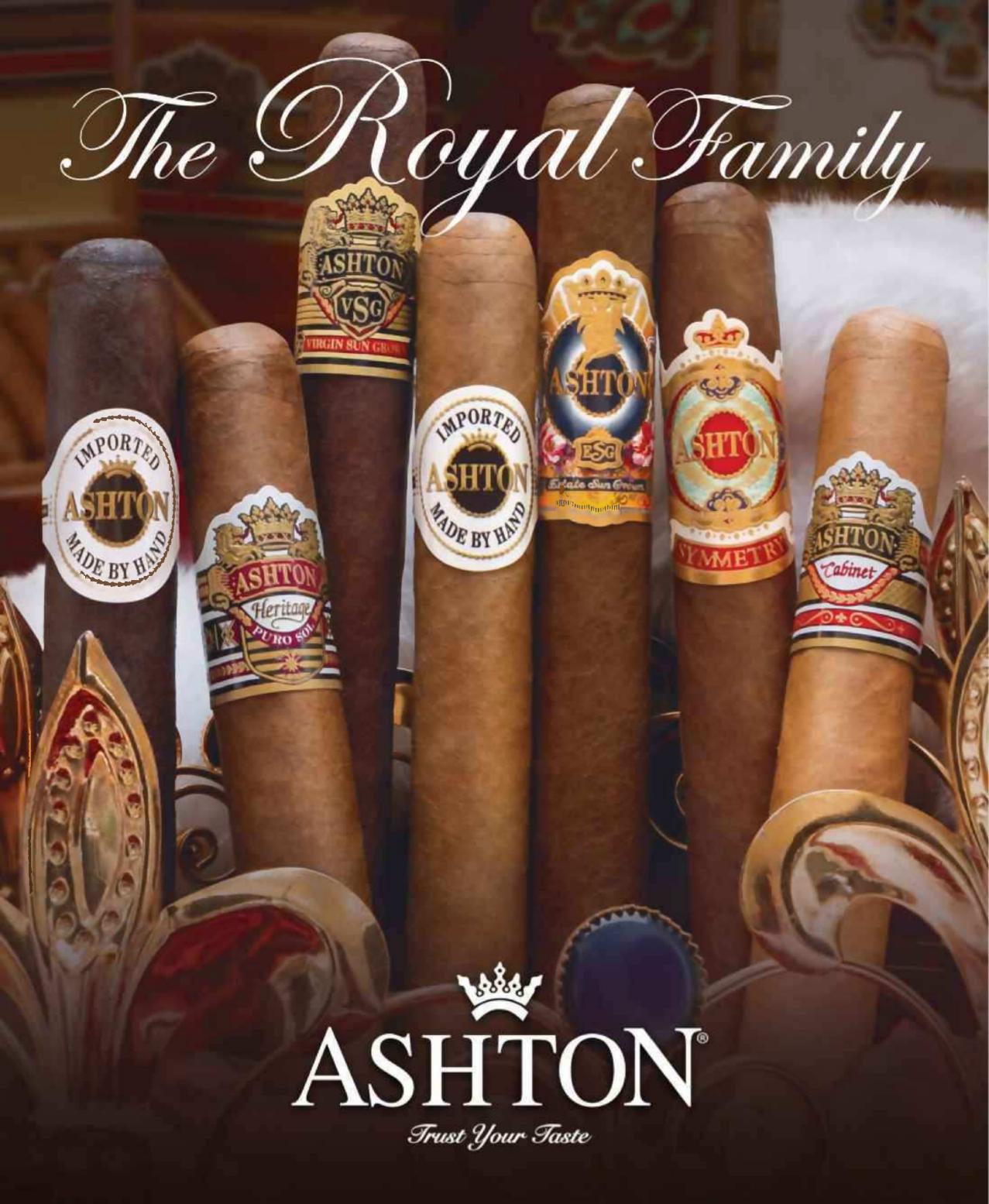
"Before satellites, GPS, electronic microchips—all this wonderful equipment that today's armed forces have—watches were one of the key tools," says Aurel Bacs, co-founder of Bacs & Russo, a Geneva consultancy and partner with Phillips. "They were used for navigation, at sea and on aircrafts."

Following his famous New York to Paris flight in 1927, with Longines as official timekeeper, Charles Lindbergh partnered with the brand to make a watch as a navigation aid. The Lindbergh Hour Angle was modeled on a piece Longines had developed with the U.S. Naval officer and navigation expert Philip van Horn Weems, who had filed a patent for the first rotating bezel in 1929. The massive 48-mm Weems Second Setting watch allowed navigators and pilots to synchronize to the second by using radio time signals and a rotating central seconds dial. "It's like a second dial that rotates in the center for pilots to use to plot courses more accurately," explains Brandon Frazin, watch specialist at Christie's, which sold a 1948 version for 35,000 Swiss francs in 2017. The Longines Avigation BigEye (\$2,625) embodies the pilot watches of the 1930s with its semigloss black dial with luminous Arabic numerals. The columnwheel chronograph movement has oversize push buttons that can be manipulated while wearing gloves.

On the eve of World War II, Breitling established the Huit Aviation Department to produce cockpit instruments and pilot watches for both military and civilian use. *Huit*, French for eight, was a reference to an eight-day power reserve. Last year, CEO Georges Kern presented the new Navitimer 8 collection in a tribute to that aviation heritage. Breitling is most famous for its Navitimer introduced in 1952 with a slide rule for flight calculations, making it the ultimate tool watch for serious pilots. This year, it revived a 1959 Navitimer with the Reference 806 1959 Re-Edition (\$8,600), a faithful reproduction endowed with the latest technology.

During World War II, watches were standard-issue gear for soldiers and pilots. American armed forces were outfitted with military spec A-11 watches produced by Bulova, Waltham and Elgin. Seikosha, a division of Seiko, supplied pilot watches to Japanese forces, and the Brits wore watches by IWC, Omega, Longines and Jaeger-LeCoultre, among others. Those military models had to resist dust, water, shocks, magnetic fields and extreme temperature fluctuations. Accuracy was critical, particularly when performing synchronized bombing runs. "Military watches were never embellished or overly decorated, they were no-nonsense designs—form followed function," says Bacs. "They had great legibility, and many of the best watch designs that have weathered the test of time are military watch designs." He adds that auctioned watches with authentic battle stories carry special value for collectors.

IWC made a watch for pilots in 1936, followed by the first Big Pilot's watch for the Luftwaffe in 1940. The German air force contracted watches from a number of brands that also included A. Lange & Söhne, Laco, Wempe and Stowa. The giant 55-mm pieces were legendary tool watches and the design was the model for



IWC's modern Big Pilot. This year, IWC concentrated on its pilot offerings with 14 models in its Spitfire, Le Petit Prince and Top Gun ranges. The latter includes innovative materials such as a beige ceramic case for the limited-edition Chronograph Mojave Desert (\$9,100) and the Double Chronograph Ceratanium (\$14,600) made with a proprietary alloy of ceramic and titanium.

After World War II, pilot watches fell out of fashion. "People went back to smaller watches," says Ghotbi. "The trend was 33, 34, 35 mm, but often with funky lugs and case shapes." But aviators still needed the functionality of a pilot's watch, and, during the mid-1950s, the French military established specifications for Type XX watches to equip its pilots. The watches had large dimensions, black dials and were equipped with a flyback function to instantly reset the chronograph to save fractions of seconds. Brands that produced these pieces included Tissot, Leonidas and, most famously, Breguet, which carries on the Type XX legacy today. It recently introduced a limitededition (111 pieces) rose-gold version of its Type XXI 3817 flyback

chronograph (\$25,600), pairing retro design with state-of-the-art movement technology, including silicon components.

With a luminary in each field, the Breguet family linked watchmaking with aviation design. Abraham-Louis Breguet, a watchmaking innovator and the cofounder of the company named for him, was the greatgreat grandfather of aircraft designer Louis Charles Breguet, whose firm made the gyroplane, a precursor to the helicopter. The companies developed chronograph mechanisms for cockpit instruments and made pilot watches, including their first wrist chronograph in 1935.

Pan Am Airways commissioned Rolex in the 1950s to produce watches that would allow pilots and crew to keep track of different time zones, and the GMT Master was born. The watches were fitted with a distinctive red and blue bezel that served as a day/night indicator. The two-tone bezel was nicknamed Pepsi. Last year, Rolex introduced a GMT Master II in steel with a Cerachrom ceramic Pepsi

bezel paired with the brand's distinctive five-link Jubilee bracelet for the first time. These pieces are in such high demand that most retailers can only offer to put you on a waitlist. The Rolex specialty website Bob's Watches sold a 2018 GMT Master II for \$22,000 last fall, more than double the retail price.

Alpina has supplied pilot watches to air forces for more than half a century. Last year, it revisited the 1970s with its Startimer Pilot Heritage GMT (\$1,395), modeled on a watch called the Dispomatic. The alarm from the original is replaced with a GMT. A rotating disc at the center of the dial indicates the second time zone. The Startimer Automatic, with a Sellita base movement, struts a daring 1970s style with its tonneau case and an orange seconds hand. Breitling also paid tribute to '60s and '70s style with the special-edition Navitimer 1 B01

Chronographs commemorating Swissair, Pan Am and TWA, airlines that embodied that golden era for globe-trotters.

Oris, which has made pilot watches since 1917, introduced its first Big Crown—named for an oversize crown that pilots could adjust with their gloves on—in 1938. This year's updated Big Crown ProPilot Timer GMT features a slimmed down 44-mm stainless steel case (\$2,600 to \$2,800). The red-tipped central GMT hand indicates a second time zone, and a bidirectional rotating bezel allows you to time events.

In the modern era, passion and great design can replace a long legacy in making aviation watches. Lifelong friends Bruno Belamich and Carlos A. Rosillo founded Bell & Ross in 1993. From the start, it developed rugged designs that evoked cockpit instruments. Collections include the signature square BR range and the Vintage collection based on pilot watches from the 1940s. Recently, the brand's design studio branched out into airplane design with the speedy BR-Bird, which competed at the Reno Air Races. To commemorate

that aircraft, the brand launched two Racing Bird watches that mimic the plane's flight instruments. The colorful BR V2-94 automatic chronograph (\$4,700, limited to 999 pieces) is accented with blue, orange and gray in a striking departure from traditional black dial and white dials.

Nick and Giles English were raised by an ex-RAF pilot, and grew up flying in vintage planes. The pair launched Bremont in 2002, naming the company for a French farmer in whose field they had made an emergency landing. Last year, the brand expanded its U-2 range, a line designed for and tested by an elite spy plane squadron. The U-2/51-JET (\$5,395) is cloaked in black and illuminated with phosphorescent material that Bremont trademarked as "51," for its use on the limited-edition P-51.

Ironically, the watch that first made the ultimate flight—the one to the moon and back—was never meant as a pilot watch. It was designed for road and track and introduced in 1957 with a tachymeter on the bezel for tracking speed. But Omega's

Speedmaster chronograph made history on the wrist of Buzz Aldrin when he strolled on the lunar surface in 1969. This year, Omega pays tribute to the flight's 50th anniversary with the Speedmaster Apollo 11 50th Anniversary Limited Edition (\$9,650). The new Cal. 3861 movement powers the model with a coaxial escapement for heightened accuracy, a hacking seconds function and extreme resistance to magnetic fields thanks to silicon components. The gray and black dial features a golden laser-engraved image of Aldrin descending to the surface. And while the Speedmaster doesn't exhibit the hallmarks of a pilot watch, it has flown higher than any other. �

Breguet XXI 3817

Laurie Kahle is a contributing editor for CIGAR AFICIONADO.





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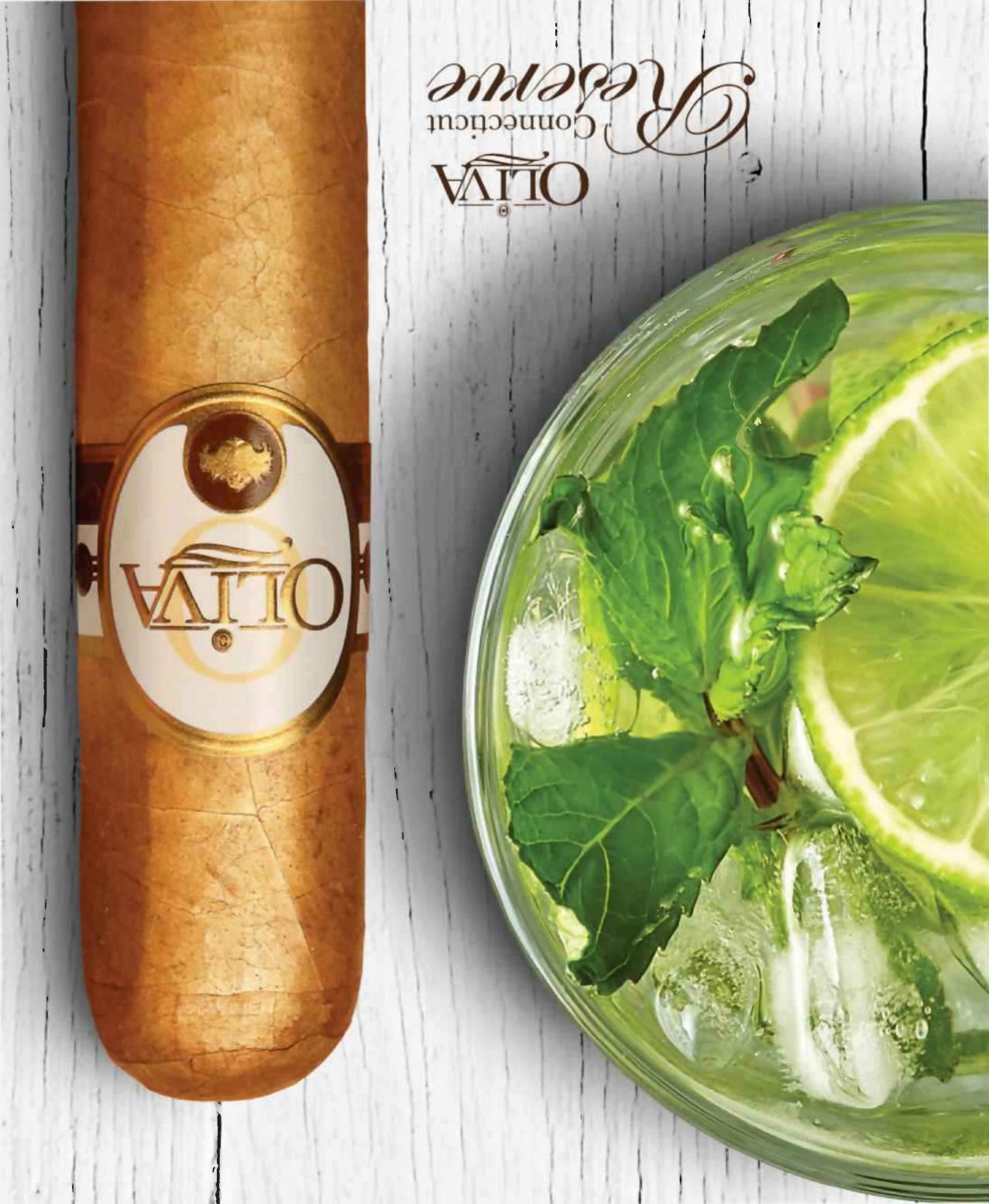
1000 Stories	Connemara Original David Nicholson Reserve	Hotaling & Co. J.H. Cutter	Maker's Mark	The Sexton Sierra Norte Mexican
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A. Smith Bowman	Devil's River Whiskey	Deluxe	Cask Strength	Black Corn
Ardbeg	Small Batch Bourbon	Triple Barrel Rye	Private Select	Yellow Corn
Arran Scotch Malt Whisky	Barrel Strength Bourbon	15 yr.	46 Cask Strength	White Corn
10 yr.	Rye	18 yr.	RC6	Purple Corn
14 yr.	Dewar's	23 yr. Cask Strength	Michter's	Speyburn
18 yr.	Dingle Distillery	(VIP hour only)	US*1	Stagg Jr.
Baker's	Dry Town Gin	Jack Daniel's	Bourbon	Stranahan's Tamdhu
Balcones Distilling Baby Blue	E.H. Taylor Eagle Rare	Jim Beam Black	Rye Sour Mash	12 yr.
True Blue 100	Elijah Craig	Double Oak	American Whiskey	15 yr.
Texas Rye 100	Small Batch	Rye	10 yr. Bourbon	Batch Strength
'l' Texas Single Malt	Barrel Proof	Repeal Batch	(VIP hour only)	Thomas H. Handy
Brimstone	18 yr. Single Barrel	Bonded	10 yr. Rye	Tincup
Texas Pot Still Bourbon	23 yr. Single Barrel	Distiller's Masterpiece	(VIP hour only)	Tobermory
Texas Single Malt Single	Few Spirits	(VIP hour only)	Minor Case Straight Rye	
Barrel The Balvenie	Four Roses Bourbon	John & Allisa's Jura	The Mocktail Project Sponsored by	Tomatin
Basil Hayden's	Small Batch	Jura 10 yr.	Brown-Forman	12 yr. 14 yr.
Original	Single Barrel	Seven Wood	Non-Alcoholic Cocktails	18 yr.
Dark Rye	Small Batch Select	18 yr.	Mossburn Scotch Whisky	Cask Strength
Two by Two Rye	2019 Limited Edition	Kavalan	Island Blended	Dualchas
Belle Meade Bourbon	Small Batch Bourbon	Kilbeggan	Speyside Blended	36 yr. (VIP hour only)
XO Cognac Cask Finish	(VIP hour only)	Original	Inchgower	Tyrconnell
Madeira Cask Finish	Gentleman Jack	Single Grain	Blair Athol	Original
Sherry Cask Finish Cask Strength Reserve	George T. Stagg Glen Grant	Small Batch Rye Knappogue Castle Single	Nikka Nooku Bourbon Cream	10 yr. Madeira Cask Finish
The Benriach	Gen Grant 12 yr.	Malt Irish	Original	15 yr. Madeira Cask Finish
Beringer Brothers Barrel	15 yr.	12 yr.	Peppermint Cream	16 yr. Oloroso & Moscatel
Aged Wines	18 yr. (VIP hour only)	14 yr.	Old Elk Blended Straight	Cask Finish
Bourbon Barrel Aged	The Glendronach	16 yr.	Bourbon	Virginia Distillery Company
Chardonnay	Glenfiddich	Knob Creek	Old Ezra 7 yr.	Prelude: Courage &
Red Blend	Glenglassaugh	Original	Old Fitzgerald	Conviction
Cabernet Sauvignon	Glengoyne	Rye	Old Forester	Weller
Tequila Barrel Aged Sauvignon Blanc	10 yr. 12 yr.	Cask Strength Rye Single Barrel	Old Potrero Old Pulteney	Wheatley Vodka WhistlePig
(VIP hour only)	18 yr.	Single Barrel Rye	Parker's Heritage	Widow Jane
Blackened American Whiskey	Legacy	Barrel Strength	Collection	Wild Turkey
Blanton's	Glenmorangie	Single Barrel	Pike Creek	Rare Breed
Blood Oath	Gooderham & Worts	Quarter Cask	10 yr. Rum Cask Finish	Kentucky Spirit
Booker's Bourbon	Original	(VIP hour only)	21 yr. Oloroso Finish	Bourbon (81)
Bowmore	49 Wellington	Laphroaig	(VIP hour only)	Rye
12 yr.	(VIP hour only) Hakushu	Cairdeas 2018	Pikesville Rye The Real McCoy Aged Rum	101 American Honey
15 yr. 18 yr.	12 yr. (VIP hour only)	10 yr. Lore	3 yr.	Master's Keep
25 yr.	18 yr. (VIP hour only)	Quarter Cask	5 yr.	Cornerstone Rye
Dorus Mor	Hatozaki	Triple Wood	12 yr.	(VIP hour only)
Vintner Series –	Small Batch	27 yr. (VIP hour only)	Rebel Yell 10 yr. Single Barrel	William Larue Weller
18 yr. Manzanilla	Finest	30 yr. (VIP hour only)	Rozelieures	Whiskey 5
(VIP hour only)	Heaven Hill	Larceny Bourbon	Russell's Reserve	Woodford Reserve
Brenne Bruichladdich	Heaven's Door	Ledaig Little Book Volume 3	6 yr. Rye	Yamazaki
Buffalo Trace	Tennessee Straight Bourbon	(VIP hour only)	10 yr. Bourbon Sagamore Spirit	12 yr. (VIP hour only) 18 yr. (VIP hour only)
Bunnahabhain	Double Barrel	Longbranch	Straight Rye	Yellowstone
Bushmills	Straight Rye	Lot 40	Signature 83 Proof	Select
Compass Box	Henry McKenna Single Barrel	Original	Cask Strength	Limited Edition
Great King Street	Hibiki	Cask Strength	Double Oak	and the second
Artist's Blend	Harmony	(VIP hour only)	Sazerac	Whisky list is subject to change.
Great King Street	17 yr. (VIP hour only)		1	
Glasgow Blend Hedonism	High West American Prairie		To the same and the same of th	
Story of the Spaniard	Bourbon		Whicker	
Spice Tree	Double Rye!	Whiskith	ADVOCATE	
Peat Monster	Rendezvous Rye		Post. T	
Oak Cross	Campfire		arry ime!	Spansored by
Myths & Legends I	Bourye (VIP hour only)	WHITE		TTT
(VIP hour only)	Yippee Ki Yay	Para Para	A CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF TH	Whisky
Myths & Legends II	(VIP hour only)	in picky!	Included	A DVOCATE
(VIP hour only) Myths & Legends III	A Midwinter Night's Dram (VIP hour only)		with your	ADVOCATE
(VIP hour only)	Hillrock Estate Distillery		lider	





Hillrock Estate Distillery

(VIP hour only)



CLECALS **BLIND CIGAR TASTING** 122 We rated 81 cigars in this issue—without knowing their identities—including a size from the elusive and mysterious Cuban Cohiba Behike BHK series. 138 **CONNOISSEUR'S CORNER** Were Cuba's Edición Limitada cigars ever intended for long-term aging? We see how some of these limited editions stood the test of time. Plus, an old Hoyo de Monterrey from a decorative box. 141 THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CONNECTICUT SHADE Once a staple in the premium cigar industry, U.S.-grown Connecticut shade tobacco is disappearing. Associate editor Andrew Nagy goes to the Connecticut River Valley to find out why. 149 THE MAN CAVE PROJECT When Paul Huston's local cigar lounge closed down, he took matters into his own hands, turning part of his home into his own personal cigar sanctuary. **CUBA REPORT: SMOKE THESE NOW** 155 Our man in Havana Gordon Mott clues us in on which recent-production Cubans are smoking well right now. 121

churchills_

La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor is an offshoot of the core La Aroma de Cuba line, both of which are made in Nicaragua by My Father Cigars for Ashton Distributors. The Churchill scored 93 points and has almost every quality that a hearty cigar fan is looking for. It's full of richness and complexity that hits on the earthy, sweet and spicy registers. This comes together thanks to its blend of Mexican wrapper and Nicaraguan tobacco, a combination quite popular in the industry. And at \$8.50, it's an undeniable value, especially for such a large cigar. Three years ago, brandowner Erik Espinosa realized he needed a Connecticut-wrapped cigar to round out his company's portfolio. What he came up with was the Espinosa Crema, a sublime yet fairly mild blend driven by a Connecticut-seed wrapper grown in Ecuador. The No. 1 scored 91 points, indicating that this line was more than just an afterthought to fill a category. Two Churchills scored 90 points: the La Aurora 1985 Maduro Churchill from the Dominican Republic, and the Montecristo Espada Oscuro Quillon, made in Nicaragua by the Plasencias for Altadis U.S.A.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR CHURCHILL

This beautifully rolled Churchill burns evenly, delivering complex layers of caramel, coffee bean and cocoa powder along with a burst of spiciness that leads to the cedary finish. A rich and tasty cigar.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

93



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ESPINOSA CREMA NO. 1

A well-made Churchill with an even burn and draw that produces lots of creamy, cedary smoke with notes of citrus, vanilla and a cocoa-like finish.

U.S.: \$9.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: BRAZIL

LA AURORA 1985 MADURO CHURCHILL

Draped in a near-black cover leaf, this long cigar has a sweet and earthy character that combines notes of cocoa powder and wood with hints of brown sugar that build to a licorice finish. The burn is clean and even.

U.S.: \$6.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

MONTECRISTO ESPADA OSCURO QUILLON

A dark cigar whose wrapper gleams with oil. It's a well-made smoke that burns evenly, delivering notes of hickory and earth with touches of ground clove and citrus.

U.S.: \$14.61 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS,
MEXICO, COLOMBIA
BINDER: COSTA RICA
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

7-20-04 CHURCHILL

While the burn of this large, imposing cigar couldn't be more even, the draw is notably tight. This Churchill shows a pleasant fruitiness along with hints of molasses and a gingerbread finish. Sweeter than it looks.

U.S.: \$9.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ARCHETYPE DREAMSTATE CHURCHILL

The head of this cigar is packed solid with tobacco, resulting in a firm draw. Wheaty and herbal at first, this Churchill takes on notes of clove, cinnamon and lemon peel. There's a hint of ripe banana on the finish.

U.S.: \$12.79 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

UNDERCROWN SHADE CORONA DOBLE

The tan wrapper of this lightly hued Churchill foretells the light notes of toast, lemon peel and wood on each puff. A bit of vanilla also comes through. Easygoing yet tasty.

U.S.: \$10.48 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY PROJECT 40 07.52

A large, well-made cigar with a clean and even burn. It's a cedary smoke with notes of vanilla and hints of nougat and citrus. The finish is short.

U.S.: \$5.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

EL GALAN NATURAL CHURCHILL

Visible pores on the wrapper and a lumpy head give this Churchill a rustic appearance. Intermittent notes of graham cracker, grass, saffron and cinnamon come and go, but the core of this cigar is woody and nutty.

U.S.: \$6.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

H. UPMANN 1844 RESERVE CHURCHILL

A lumpy Churchill with an inconsistent draw. Tangy and earthy, the smoke develops a few more refined notes of coffee bean, earth and leather.

U.S.: \$8.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GLORIA CUBANA SERIE R NO. 7

A big, dark log of a cigar with a very round head. It's a predominantly woody, wheaty smoke with a cinnamon finish. The draw is a bit firm, resulting in a thin smoke.

U.S.: \$10.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

87



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP. BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE 1992 CHURCHILL

Long and squarely pressed, this Churchill has a slightly firm draw, but shows a core earthiness with hints of anise and cocoa and an oily finish.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR U.S.: \$10.35 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7 1/4"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE CHURCHILL

The draw of this large cigar showed some consistency issues, sometimes bringing copious amounts of smoke, other times thin. Fruity, woody notes have an earthy base with hints of grass and a muddled finish.

U.S.: \$6.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

corona gordas_

A strong category with many high achievers, most notably two cigars that scored 93 points. The Cuban H. Upmann Magnum 50 started out as an Edición Limitada in 2005. A few years later, Habanos put it into regular production. This tall toro topped the category at 93 points, tying with the Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series Exclusivo, a Nicaraguan puro of superlative quality. It has all the uncanny notes of coffee and cocoa that make the 1964 Anniversary Series so widely prized. The Southern Draw Kudzu Toro, a newcomer to our pages, was close behind at 92 points. It's a small brand founded by Robert Holt and made in Nicaragua by A.J. Fernandez. The company is headquartered in Texas.



CUBA

H. UPMANN MAGNUM 50

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 63/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: AUGUST 2015**

The burn of this cigar is exceptionally even and razor sharp, and there's a touch of resistance on the draw. Rich and creamy, the smoke is nutty from beginning to end, showing precise notes of almond and vanilla that resonate on the palate for a long, elegant finish. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £28.10 STRENGTH: Medium

93



NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES **EXCLUSIVO**

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

A box-pressed toro that produces a flaky ash. Its sweet foundation of cocoa powder and vanilla are balanced by equally bold notes of dark-roasted coffee bean. The draw is opulent, the smoke, chewy and rich. U.S.: \$12.30 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

93



NICARAGUA

SOUTHERN DRAW KUDZU TORO

92

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR An oily, box-pressed cigar with an even, open draw. Sweet and spicy notes of brown sugar, pepper and toffee are underscored by a foundation of nuts, wood and coffee bean. The cigar is rolled with a closed foot. U.S.: \$9.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

JUAN LOPEZ SELECCIÓN NO. 1

91

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: JULY 2017**

Rich and delightful with all the nutty sweetness of a fruitcake. Every puff is full of chestnut, raisin, fig and nutmeg notes. Touches of leather complement the espresso finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £21.20 STRENGTH: Medium



NICARAGUA

THE T SHORT CHURCHILL

91

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

Dark and alluring, this box-pressed cigar has a lush draw and even burn. Rich notes of chocolate and almond paste are elevated by touches of coffee bean and anise. The finish is sweet.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: HONDURAS **BINDER: HONDURAS**

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

EIROA DARK 54X6

The excellent draw of this well-made cigar is even and full, delivering clear notes of pistachio, cinnamon and allspice before the cedary finish.

U.S.: \$13.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER LA GRAN OFERTA TORO

The leathery smoke of this well-made cigar is bolstered by elements of sweet brioche, nuts and white pepper. The cigar burns evenly.

U.S.: \$8.36 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 57 LENGTH: 6 1/8" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

AGING ROOM SOLERA SUN GROWN FANFARE

The tobacco of this fairly fat cigar has the earthy, smoky qualities of heavily peated Scotch, along with notes of tar and black pepper, but a sweet, dried cherry note still comes through.

U.S.: \$9.11 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5 7/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JUNE 2018

HOYO DE MONTERREY

LE HOYO DE SAN JUAN
An over-packed head tightens the draw of this reddish toro. Notes of toast and leather come through as do the boozy qualities of rum and oak.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £30.40 STRENGTH: Medium

88



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

PADILLA CRIOLLO-98 TORO

The draw of this dark corona gorda is a bit firm, but delivers an earthy smoke of coffee bean and cocoa with a hint of spice, however the tea-like finish is muted.

U.S.: \$8.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

POR LARRAÑAGA TORO

A primarily woody smoke, this lightly hued cigar draws easily, showing touches of spice and nuts before a creamy finish.

88



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE 1999 CONNECTICUT TORO

U.S.: \$7.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

Other than a few prominent veins, the wrapper here is attractive and clean. It draws and burns evenly, starting herbal and bland. As it warms, it becomes creamy with notes of vanilla bean, toast and slate.

U.S.: \$10.35 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: BRAZIL WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

LIGA PRIVADA NO. 9 CORONA VIVA

The white ash of this dark cigar forms in stark contrast to the near-black wrapper. Earthy, tarry notes on first light dissipate to usher in a more easygoing, coffee-like smoke.

U.S.: \$12.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

87



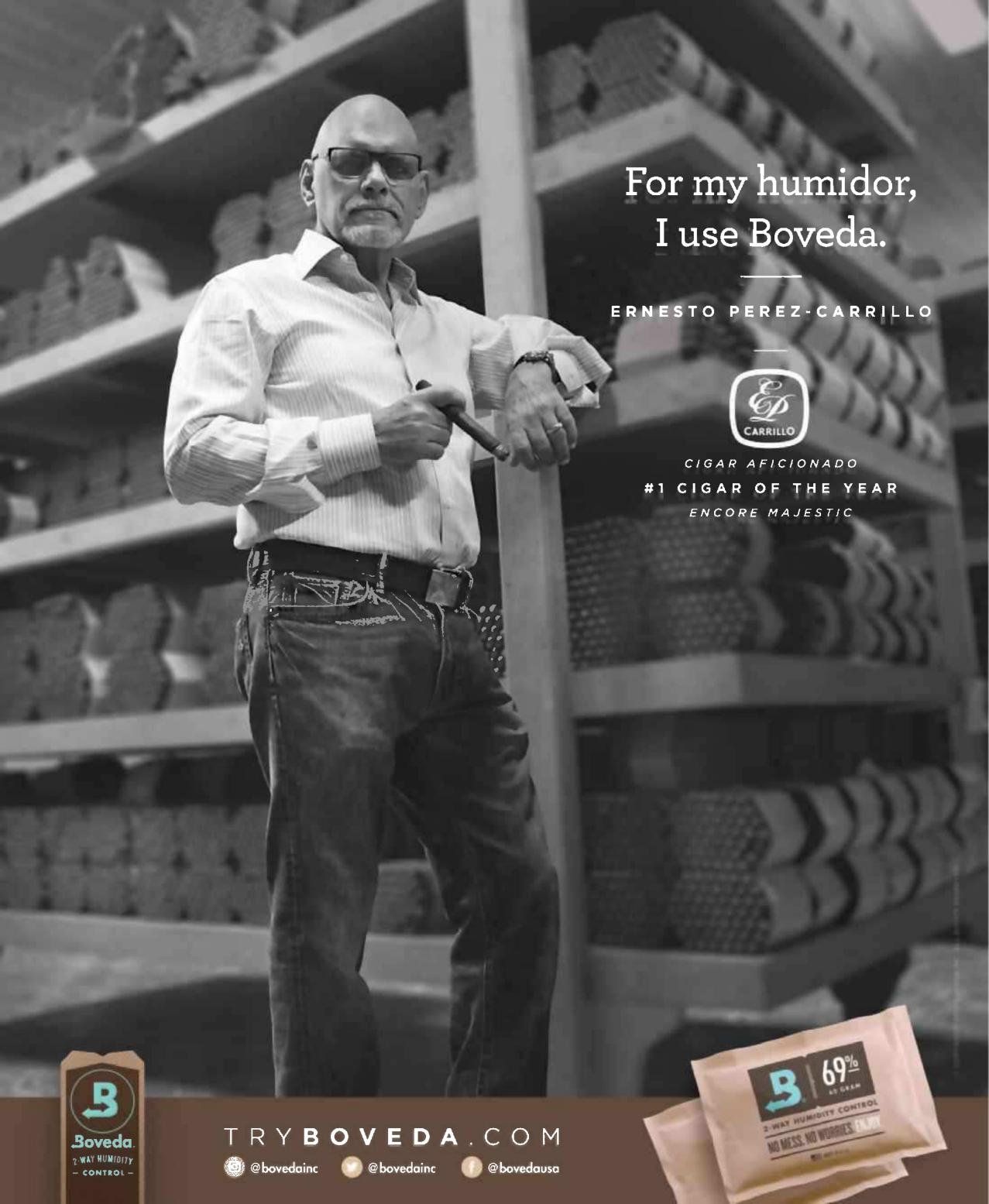
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DIAMOND CROWN JULIUS CAESER TORO

Dents and divots around the head give this cigar a rather rough appearance. It's a tart and woody smoke with a vague sweetness and a sawdust finish.

U.S.: \$14.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



figurados

More than half the cigars in this category of shapely smokes scored 90 points or higher. Two cigars made in the Dominican Republic led the section with 92 points, both made in very different styles. The Arturo Fuente Hemingway Signature is an old-school composition of Cameroon wrapper around a blend of Dominican tobacco that showcases this African cover leaf. Despite its tapers, the cigar burns and draws with textbook precision, showing all the nuttiness, spice and citrus that Fuente's Cameroon-wrapped cigars are known for. Also double tapered and curvy, the Davidoff Nicaragua Diadema is so named for its mélange of Nicaraguan tobacco. Combustion is exemplary, forming a solid, shapely ash. Davidoff Nicaragua can best be defined as a Nicaraguan blend with Davidoff style, meaning that it shows restraint and elegance, favoring polished sophistication rather than hammering the palate with heavy-handed smoke. ■ Two cigars scored 91 points. The CAO Gold Torpedo, made in Nicaragua by General Cigar Co., and the Surrogates Animal Cracker, produced in Nicaragua by My Father Cigars for Tatuaje.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY SIGNATURE

Beautifully tapered on both ends, this figurado draws and burns evenly, showing a sweet and spicy character with the citrus tang of orange peel and cedar over a nutty core. Complex and satisfying. U.S.: \$9.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

DAVIDOFF NICARAGUA DIADEMA

Double tapered with alluring curves and an oily colorado wrapper. The draw and burn are even and the ash is sturdy. It's a salty, nutty smoke redolent of leather and hazelnut with fruity hints of stewed plums, some sassafras and an espresso finish.

U.S.: \$21.00 U.K.: £32.73 STRENGTH: Medium-Full

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: ECUADOR

CAO GOLD TORPEDO

The open, nearly effortless draw of this large pyramid delivers a woody smoke that bursts with lively notes of orange peel, almond and raisins, all of which converge on the finish.

U.S.: \$7.89 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA

SURROGATES ANIMAL CRACKER

A complex smoke with a powerful, interesting spectrum of earthy flavors ranging from Sumatra-bean coffee to peated Scotch. A very clear underlying citrus note of WRAPPER: ECUADOR orange peel persists before the chocolate finish. U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: NICARAGUA **BINDER: NICARAGUA** WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

TIMELESS SUPREME 652T

Oaky and tannic like a red wine barrel, this oily torpedo also has a steady undercurrent of baking spices that includes nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger, all of which meld for a sweet espresso finish.

U.S.: \$10.65 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8" FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA BINDER: HONDURAS WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ALEC BRADLEY CONNECTICUT TORPEDO

A light and veiny torpedo that shows a very nutty core framed by hints of cedar, vanilla and nougat. The toasty finish also hints of almonds and cashews.

U.S.: \$7.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER LE BIJOU 1922 TORPEDO BOX PRESSED

There's a rust-colored patina to the wrapper of this box-pressed torpedo. It's quite strong at first, full of tangy earth and coffee, but settles down a bit to show a caramel sweetness and an oaky finish.

90



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

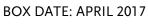
WRAPPER: CUBA

SANCHO PANZA BELICOSO

U.S.: \$11.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

It takes a while for this belicoso to get past its initial leathery dryness, but the cigar opens up to show a profound caramel note wrapped around an earthy core. Hints of nougat and vanilla also emerge.

90



U.S.: N/A U.K.: £22.20 STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BUENAVENTURA D7

A box-pressed belicoso with a rounded tip. Strong notes of coffee and earth are balanced by sweeter hints of mocha and caramel. A bit of nuttiness precedes the mineral finish.

U.S.: \$5.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: BRAZIL, NICARAGUA BINDER: MEXICO WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

NEW WORLD CONNECTICUT BELICOSO

Made with flawless symmetry, this tan belicoso has a perfectly round body. It exhibits perfect combustion and draws well. The smoke is creamy and woody, enlivened by pleasant notes of almond, vanilla, nougat and a hint of lemon.

U.S.: \$7.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SERINO ROYALE CONNECTICUT TORPEDO

Covered in a Connecticut wrapper, this blond torpedo draws and burns evenly, showing notes of coffee bean, faint nuttiness and cedar, all with an underlying tartness.

U.S.: \$10.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

E.P. CARRILLO SELECCION OSCURO PIRAMIDES ROYAL

A very dark, oily torpedo with even combustion and slight resistance to the draw. Earthy to the core, the smoke has some salty and mineral qualities as well as hints of cocoa powder, but the earth dominates on the finish.

U.S.: \$9.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

0/



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/8" FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS BINDER: BRAZIL WRAPPER: ECUADOR

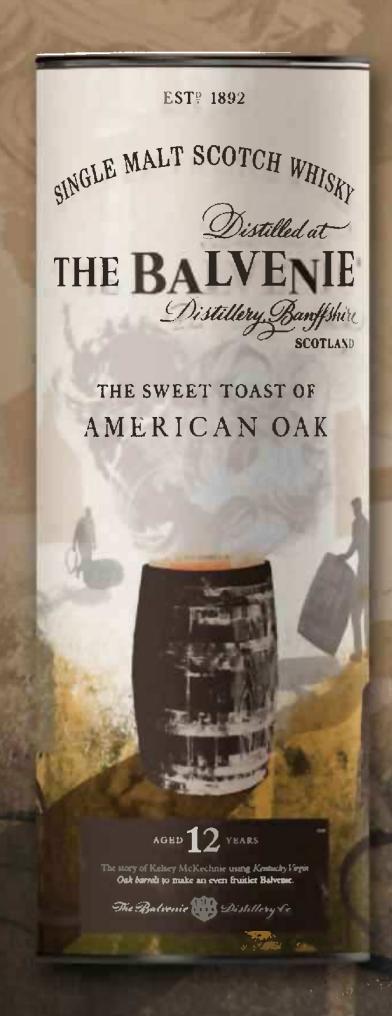
CAMACHO ECUADOR FIGURADO

Soft spots plague this dark torpedo, which has a blistery, uneven burn and airy draw. Earthy, peppery notes also carry hints of fruit, but the finish is muddled and acidic.

U.S.: \$9.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

A in flavour and flame...

Inspired to produce an even fruitier, sweeter Balvenie, Apprentice Malt Master Kelsey McKechnie had the bright idea to import Virgin Oak barrels from Kentucky. The barrels are twice toasted, once in Kentucky and once at The Balvenie Cooperage to drive the heat further into the wood and bring out as much flavour as possible. After this extra deep toast, they are filled with classic Balvenie and laid down to further mature. The result is a delectably complex whisky with notes of caramelized fruit, oak, coconut and delicate vanilla.





Pack includes downloadable audio book with a guided tasting. Visit TheBalvenie.com/Stories for more info.

Introducing

THE BALVENIE

STORIES



miscellaneous_

A grouping of misfits, oddities and shapes that don't quite fit into our traditional parameters, the miscellaneous category in this issue has plenty of short, fat robustos, although more and more companies are incorporating shorter formats into their portfolios. So it's not too unusual to see something like the Balmoral Añejo XO Connecticut Petit Robusto FT, a truncated Churchill that scored 92 points. It's made in the Dominican Republic and the brand is owned by Royal Agio Cigars, a European-based company undergoing an acquisition—General Cigar Co. is buying the company. Although the E.P. Carrillo La Historia El Senador is made in the Dominican Republic, there isn't a single leaf of Dominican tobacco in the blend. The 92-point cigar is made at the La Alianza factory owned by Ernesto Perez-Carrillo. Four cigars scored 90 points: the Oliva Serie V No. 4, which is somewhere between a corona and petit corona; the strong and hearty Padrón Serie 1926 No. 35; the Cuban Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchill; and the cartoonishly thick JFR Lunatic El Chiquito Maduro, rolled in a 70 ring gauge.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., U.S.A./PENN.
BROADLEAF, BRAZIL
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

BALMORAL AÑEJO XO CONNECTICUTPETIT ROBUSTO FT

Topped with a fantail cap, this short blond robusto draws perfectly, imparting a cedary, nutty smoke that also shows notes of coffee bean, vanilla and earth.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 3/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

E.P. CARRILLO LA HISTORIA EL SENADOR

Near black and gleaming with oil, this pressed robusto has a lush and substantial draw. Big notes of oak and vanilla are balanced by leather and finely ground white pepper. Bold and balanced.

U.S.: \$11.05 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

92



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 70 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

JFR LUNATIC EL CHIQUITO MADURO

Though mammoth and solid, this huge plug of a cigar burns and draws quite evenly. An initial blast of spice calms down to show a nutty, herbal smoke with hints of graham cracker and an anise finish.

U.S.: \$7.28 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

OLIVA SERIE V NO. 4

A hearty, toasty corona that exhibits the qualities of coffee bean and cashews along with notes of cocoa powder and spice before the slightly dry finish. The draw and burn are fairly even.

U.S.: \$6.87 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN SERIE 1926 NO. 35

The peppery and tart first puffs of this box-pressed petit robusto settle down to show a sweeter smoke of cocoa powder and maple with a hint of coffee on the finish.

U.S.: \$12.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium





BAHAMAS

RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4 1/2" FILLER: NICARAGUA, GREECE, HONDURAS, COSTA RICA BINDER: ECUADOR WRAPPER: ECUADOR

GRAYCLIFF CRYSTAL TACO

Soft and spongy to the touch, this small cigar begins vegetal and herbal, only to become irredeemably bitter.

U.S.: \$11.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

panetelas_

Panetelas have little room for error. Because the ring gauges are so thin, the internal tobacco blend has to be very precise. And because the wrapper plays such an integral part of a panetela's character, it must be of top grade. Made by Drew Esate in Nicaragua, the Herrera Esteli Habano Edicion Limitada Lancero scored 93 points, exceeding the criteria that a successful lancero demands. Three slim cigars scored 92 points. The La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero blend is already strong, but scaling it down to a 38 ring gauge really concentrated its power and flavor. The same enhancing effect also happened with the La Galera Habano Perillas and the Romeo y Julieta Reserva Real.



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI HABANO EDICION LIMITADA LANCERO

Long, slim and well-made with a lush draw and even burn. Elegant notes of walnut and cedar are balanced by a hearty base of leather, earth and coffee bean. The sweet finish hints of honey.

U.S.: \$12.46 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP.

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LANCERO

Everything about this lancero is concentrated and strong, from the dense caramel notes and spicy bursts of crushed black pepper to the zesty cedar and bold, dark-roasted coffee bean, all of which show on the finish.

U.S.: \$11.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GALERA HABANO PERILLAS

This dark panetela shows the warm, bready qualities of a salted pretzel before taking on nuttier notes of almonds and cashews. Lots of leather comes through as well. The draw is a touch firm, but the burn dead even.

U.S.: \$7.40 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

92

93

92



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 36 LENGTH: 7" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL PORTO REAL

The slightly firm draw of this tan panetela imparts a dense, nutty smoke with notes of salt and wood balanced by hints of nutmeg and molasses.

U.S.: \$8.22 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

92



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2017

COHIBA LANCERO

Long and slender with a pigtail cap. The draw is firm, but workable, and the burn is even. First puffs are floral and earthy before showing notes of salted caramel, chestnut and graham cracker, all culminating in a nutty finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £36.30 STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ILLUSIONE FUME D'AMOUR JUNIPEROS

The copious draw and even burn of this well-made panetela are flawless. It's rich and complex showing distinct notes of coffee, almonds, amaretto, cedar and the earthy, sweet finish of truffle-flecked honey.

U.S.: \$10.80 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PLASENCIA ALMA DEL FUEGO FLAMA

An oily, box-pressed cigar made with an uncut foot and three-seam cap. First puffs are woody and spicy with sweet touches of brown sugar and nuttiness. The sweet finish is redolent of vanilla.

U.S.: \$17.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

91



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

KRISTOFF LIGERO CRIOLLO LANCERO

Made with a coiled, pigtail cap, this notably oily cigar burns and draws well. It's woody and earthy with hints of vanilla and spice.

U.S.: \$9.02 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full

89



U.S.A.

RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

TATUAJE CABINET ESPECIALES

Topped with a three-seam cap and a pigtail, this lancero draws and burns cleanly, leaving impressions of fruit and wood on the palate along with mineral notes of stone and slate. There are notes of anise on the finish.

U.S.: \$11.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

88



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: MARCH 2015

TRINIDAD FUNDADORES

The floral first puffs of this slender smoke become woody with clear notes of graham cracker, nougat and cinnamon. There's a hint of brown sugar on the finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £33.40 STRENGTH: Medium

88



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

BELLAS ARTES MADURO LANCERO

Skinny and squarely box pressed with a black wrapper. The firm draw required double-puffing each time just to keep the cigar lit. It's sweet and bready with notes of saffron and a finish of oak and licorice, but the draw hurt the score.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

87



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 36 LENGTH: 6" FILLER: DOM. REP. BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

ASHTON PANETELA

Thin and pale with a round head, this slim cigar is woody and light with some tangy hints of lemon and minerals and a touch of earth.

U.S.: \$8.90 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

86



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO

TABERNACLE HAVANA SEED CT #142 LANCERO

Gleaming with oil, this long smoke is draped in a dark wrapper, but the draw is inconsistent. A big, initial blast of black pepper and minerals is followed by dark chocolate and burnt toast, leaving a gritty, herbal aftertaste.

U.S.: \$12.75 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

86



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

AVO XO PRELUDIO

Yellowish in appearance, this long smoke has an open, airy draw, offering a woody, papery smoke with hints of balsa and a musty finish.

U.S.: \$10.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild

robustos_

It isn't often that we find Cuban Cohiba Behikes in the market. Habanos S.A. releases so little each year, and the few boxes that make it to retail are often purchased in advance before the cigars have even arrived. But when we get the opportunity to taste these in a blind setting, Behikes usually excell, showing the type of refinement, harmony and expressiveness that one would expect from a cigar with such mystique. Formerly a CIGAR AFICIONADO Cigar of the Year (2010), the Cohiba Behike BHK 52 was the highest-scoring cigar of the issue. One of the distinct tobaccos in the blend is the medio tiempo, a rare, flavor-dense leaf that sprouts unpredictably atop only a precious few plants.



CUBA

COHIBA BEHIKE BHK 52

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 3/4" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2018**

Golden brown with a flag-tip cap, this opulent cigar begins floral before layering the palate with tea and honey notes, and intensifying with almonds, vanilla and graham cracker. The finish is oaky and sweet. U.S.: N/A U.K.: £50.10 STRENGTH: Medium



NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 2000 MADURO

92

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"

Though a bit rough in appearance, this cigar burns and draws beautifully, showing an elegant array of nuts, nougat and caramel leading to a chocolate espresso finish—complexity that belies the cigar's rustic wrapper. U.S.: \$6.10 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

91



NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA BINDER: NICARAGUA

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MICALLEF GRANDE BOLD MADURO 552M

The open draw of this dark robusto delivers pleasing

notes of cocoa powder, wood and coffee bean before the long, sweet finish.

U.S.: \$7.49 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full



CUBA

PUNCH SHORT DE PUNCH

91

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 3/4" FILLER: CUBA BINDER: CUBA WRAPPER: CUBA **BOX DATE: JULY 2019**

This tawny robusto, which draws and burns beautifully, has a backbone of coffee, oak and leather that also shows sweeter notes of toffee and butterscotch. Hints of tea emerge before the hazelnut finish. U.S.: N/A Switz: 13.30 Sw. Fr. STRENGTH: Medium



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4" FILLER: DOM. REP.

BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: CAMEROON Toothy in appearance with a very even burn and consistent draw. The smoke is chewy and rich with notes of peanut, toffee and walnut that stay in balance throughout the smoke.

ARTURO FUENTE DON CARLOS ROBUSTO

U.S.: \$10.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF **BINDER: INDONESIA** WRAPPER: MEXICO

LA BARBA RICOCHET CRÜ OSCURO 50 X 5

As powerful as it looks, this dark, oily robusto saturates the palate with strong notes of coffee and earth balanced by hints of black pepper, oak and a touch of sweet rum. The draw and burn are even throughout. U.S.: \$9.60 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Full



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PERDOMO LOT 23 ROBUSTO

The wrapper of this robusto is the color of milk chocolate. Up front earthiness and spice develop a midpalate coffee note before a sweeter finish of brown sugar and nuts.

U.S.: \$6.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

90



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5" FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA BINDER: DOM. REP. WRAPPER: MEXICO

A. FLORES 1975 GRAN RESERVA MADURO ROBUSTO

Silky to the touch, this dark cigar has many fine seams around the cap. The smoke delivers a combination of earth and coffee with a vanilla sweetness, touch of anise and herbal finish.

U.S.: \$10.00 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



CUBA

RING GAUGE: 51 LENGTH: 5 3/8"

FILLER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

WRAPPER: CUBA

BOX DATE: JANUARY 2015

MONTECRISTO EDMUNDO

Solidly rolled with a flat head and three-seam cap. The draw is a tad tight but still offers a distinct core of earth, crushed walnut and lemon-zested nougat before the oaky finish.

U.S.: N/A U.K.: £25.70 STRENGTH: Medium

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SAN ISIDRO HERMOSO

A quaintly box-pressed robusto with a three-seam cap and rounded shoulders. It's a strong smoke, full of leather, coffee and earth brought together by woody notes of hickory and mesquite.

U.S.: \$9.20 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



NICARAGUA

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VILLIGER SAN'DORO COLORADO

ROBUSTO

Woody and earthy with notes of freshly split pine, nuts and toffee. There's a charcoal note on the finish of this cigar, which shows even combustion throughout.

U.S.: \$8.50 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

89



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: BRAZIL, DOM. REP.,
NICARAGUA
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

COHIBA CONNECTICUT

CRYSTAL ROBUSTO (TUBO)

A light-brown cigar with an open draw and even burn. Its woody, nutty smoke is spiced up a bit with hints of black pepper and cinnamon.

U.S.: \$20.99 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium

88



HONDURAS

RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

CASA MAGNA OSCURO ROBUSTO

An inky-black robusto with a slight taper to the shoulders. Heavy floral notes usher in hints of licorice, wood and ripe fruit, though there's some bitterness on the aftertaste.

U.S.: \$8.44 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Medium-Full

85



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

FONSECA 5-50

Wrapped in a pale cover leaf, this robusto burns evenly with an open, substantial draw. The smoke is creamy with hints of wood, citrus and vanilla bean, but a soapy aftertaste affected the score.

U.S.: \$8.25 U.K.: N/A STRENGTH: Mild-Medium

TOP SCORES, VALUES AND STRENGTH | BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 153



TOP SCORES

94 Cohiba Behike BHK 52
Cuba • £50.10 • Robusto • Medium



93 H. Upmann Magnum 50
Cuba • £28.10 • Corona Gorda • Medium



93 Herrera Esteli Habano Edicion Limitada Lancero Nicaragua • \$12.46 • Panetela • Medium



93 La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Churchill
Nicaragua • \$8.50 • Churchill • Medium-Full



Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series ExclusivoNicaragua • \$12.30 • Corona Gorda • Medium-Full



92 Arturo Fuente Hemingway Signature
Dominican Republic • \$9.25 • Figurado • Medium



92 Davidoff Nicaragua Diadema
Dominican Republic • \$21.00 • Figurado • Medium-Full



92 E.P. Carrillo La Historia El Senador
Dominican Republic • \$11.05 • Miscellaneous • Full



92 La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero Lancero
Dominican Republic • \$11.80 • Panetela • Full



92 Romeo y Julieta Reserva Real Porto Real Dominican Republic • \$8.22 • Panetela • Medium

TOP VALUES



92 Padrón 2000 Maduro
Nicaragua • \$6.10 • Robusto • Medium



90 La Aurora 1985 Maduro Churchill
Dominican Republic • \$6.00 • Churchill • Medium



90 Perdomo Lot 23 Robusto
Nicaragua • \$6.25 • Robusto • Medium-Full



89 Buenaventura D7
Nicaragua • \$5.90 • Figurado • Medium-Full



Alec Bradley Project 40 07.52
Nicaragua • \$5.99 • Churchill • Medium

MILDER CIGARS

91 CAO Gold Torpedo
Nicaragua • \$7.89 • Figurado • Mild-Medium

91 Espinosa Crema No. 1 Nicaragua • \$9.25 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

Archetype Dreamstate ChurchillDominican Republic • \$12.79 • Churchill • Mild-Medium

89 New World Connecticut Belicoso
Nicaragua • \$7.40 • Figurado • Mild-Medium

88 Por Larrañaga Toro
Dominican Republic • \$7.20 • Corona Gorda • Mild

MEDIUM-BODIED CIGARS

92 Balmoral Añejo XO Connecticut Petit Robusto FT Dominican Republic • \$8.50 • Miscellaneous • Medium

92 La Galera Habano Perillas
Dominican Republic • \$7.40 • Panetela • Medium

91 Cohiba Lancero
Cuba • £36.30 • Panetela • Medium

91 Juan Lopez Selección No. 1 Cuba • £21.20 • Corona Gorda • Medium

90 Alec Bradley Connecticut Torpedo Honduras • \$7.90 • Figurado • Medium

STRONGER SMOKES

91 Micallef Grande Bold Maduro 552M Nicaragua • \$7.49 • Robusto • Medium-Full

91 Plasencia Alma del Fuego Flama
Nicaragua • \$17.00 • Panetela • Medium-Full

90 La Barba Ricochet Crü Oscuro 50 x 5
Dominican Republic • \$9.60 • Robusto • Full

90 My Father Le Bijou 1922 Torpedo Box Pressed Nicaragua • \$11.50 • Figurado • Full

Kristoff Ligero Criollo LanceroDominican Republic • \$9.02 • Panetela • Full

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connoisseur's corner.

puff No. 1, redolent of coffee bean and truffles. There's just a touch of copper in there, and

plenty of sweet spice on the finish, which is quite long, and smacks of black tea.

The draw isn't perfect, but the flavor is spot on. —David Savona



HABANA 2000 CUBA

97 MONTECRISTO ROBUSTO MILLENNIUM RESERVE (1999)

A beautiful 20-year-old cigar filled with the entire range of flavors, from earthy and savory, to a solid dash of spiciness, all on the first puff. It smoothes out to show a soft peppery note throughout. This cigar offers everything an aged cigar should have; a perfect melding of all its flavor components and a near-perfect smoking performance. Still plenty of life left in this special release for the millennium.



94 MONTECRISTO SUBLIMES EDICIÓN LIMITADA (2008)

What was once a fairly bold cigar has matured to show the delicate, sugary sweetness of an almond cookie, along with notes of marzipan, cinnamon, some butterscotch and a hint of sea salt. A floral quality has developed that is prominent on first puffs, but fades to the background. The wrapper is rustic, and not the most pristine leaf that Cuba has ever put on a cigar, but it's much sweeter than it looks.

—Gregory Mottola



92 COHIBA SUBLIMES EDICIÓN LIMITADA (2004)

The wrapper on this large, fat cigar is rough and toothy, but it has a superb burn and draw. The smoke has a core of dark chocolate and a flinty note, as well as a faint herbal character that's far more pronounced in the early third of the smoke than later. It's medium bodied, flirting with medium full, and maintains its chocolate quality, but the earthy, flinty edge prevents it from being a masterpiece.

—David Savona

—Gordon Mott



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Dinthe I/SI/A

Once the most popular cigar tobacco in the world, genuine Connecticut shade is in danger of disappearing forever

BY ANDREW NAGY PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID YELLEN

otorists turning westbound from Interstate 91 onto Connecticut Route 20 near the small town of Windsor witnessed a sight this past June that would break the hearts of agricultural appreciators and cigar enthusiasts alike. For as long as residents can remember, a series of traditional barns used to cure freshly picked Connecticut shade tobacco could be seen from this part of the state highway, a roughly five-mile stretch known as the Bradley Airport Connector. But on this day, the barns were gone—reduced to wood piles.

While locals were surprised, many were not shocked. After all, it's no secret that the state's once-bustling shade tobacco industry has taken a sharp turn for the worse in recent years. Countries such as Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and even Brazil now grow their own variation of Connecticut shade that's at least on par with the original in terms of quality, if not better if you factor in the







Top left, a laborer fills a bin with shade leaves, then they are gathered, above, before being sewn together, top right, and hung in barns.

lower price. Add in the costly overhead of growing shade in the Upper Connecticut River Valley as well as developers with deep pockets frothing at the mouth to pave over the fields, and one can begin to understand why Connecticut's shade farmers would be inclined to give up, or switch to another type of crop.

The razed barns actually belonged to O.J. Thrall Inc., one of the oldest farming families in America. Up until recently, the Thralls were the largest growers of golden Connecticut shade wrapper tobacco, which is prized by cigarmakers for its distinct mild flavor and aroma that complements and rounds out almost all types of tobaccos in a blend.

"It is one of the cleanest, silkiest smooth and most elegant wrappers in the cigar world," says Nick Melillo, owner of Foundation Cigar Co. Melillo grew up in the Valley, his company is headquartered there and he uses shade on his Charter Oak CT shade brand. "Connecticut shade's vein and cellular structure are very thin compared to many other seed varieties, such as Cuban seed. Due to the nature of the leaf, it is like the icing on the cake; it really enables the blender to display the filler tobaccos and the

wrapper puts the finishing touches on the binder tobacco. The aroma and flavor is pleasant, smooth and mild."

The Thrall's biggest customer was General Cigar Co., whose Connecticut shade varieties include such popular brands as Macanudo and Hoyo de Monterrey Excalibur. A little over two years ago, the Thralls decided that growing shade tobacco was no longer economically viable. Now they only grow Connecticut broadleaf, a genetically different plant that grows in the open sunlight and is used to make dark, maduro cigars. (Broadleaf, unlike shade, is actually enjoying a bit of an uptick this year.) The company announced plans in 2017 to sell around 325 acres of land they once used for shade tobacco in Windsor and nearby Windsor Locks. That year, a 67-acre plot of premium farmland was put up for sale at \$13.5 million; a nearly 22-acre field nearby was being advertised for \$2.4 million; and another 27-acre parcel commanded a price of \$3.37 million. In an area where the average income is around \$37,000, that's big money.

The 76 acres along Route 20 where the razed barns were located—about two and a half hours north of Manhattan—already appear poised for transformation. In May, Windsor Locks residents voted to approve plans for the construction of a brand new \$213 million sports and entertainment complex that is slated to offer a host of amenities, including a 5,500-seat outdoor soccer stadium. Developer JABS Sports Management has also promised nearly 400 jobs (with at least 86 to be filled by Windsor Locks residents), as well as an estimated \$15 million boost in local spending in its first year of operation.

This pressure to develop Connecticut's best farmland into industrial and commercial zones is immense, but not new. In fact, part of the reason Interstate 91 was built in the 1960s was to boost urban renewal along the Connecticut River's "low value" waterfront. Three lanes in both directions, I-91 begins in New Haven and stays close to the Connecticut River as it bisects the state and connects larger cities such as Hartford to Springfield, Massachusetts, before continuing up through Vermont and ending at the Canadian border. In the Valley, it is common to see vibrant tobacco fields of

Connecticut broadleaf, Havana and shade next to housing developments and shopping centers. This includes areas around Windsor and extends north to Southwick, Massachusetts.

Unfortunately, the best farmland is also usually the most tantalizing for developers. And the Upper Connecticut River Valley where shade is grown is ripe with "some of the best agricultural soils in the Northeast," according to Dr. James LaMondia, chief scientist for The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, or CAES. Established in 1875 as the first laboratory of its kind, CAES works closely with all types of farmers to conduct scientific research in agriculture to increase crop yields and boost resistance to disease and pests. It was here that the famous Connecticut shade seed, after years of crossbreeding with the Havana-, broadleaf- and Sumatraseed varietals, was developed for its release in 1910. LaMondia works to breed new types of shade seeds that are resistant not only to blue mold, which can destroy 100 percent of a crop in a year, but also to tobacco cyst nematode, a nasty little parasite that feeds on the plant's roots.

The Windsor series of soils in the Valley consists of mostly permeable sand that drains water excessively fast. "The soils here are fantastic," says LaMondia, who's been studying tobacco out of the Windsor office of CAES since 1987. "I've worked in other places where you go to take a soil sample and you have to try three or four

times to be able to get down six inches without hitting rocks. Here they just don't exist. In many places you can't find a rock." Glaciers are the reason: the land once sat at the bottom of Lake Hitchcock, a glacial lake that formed when the Laurentide Ice Sheet retreated back to the Arctic some 15,000 years ago.

The topsoil here is not measured in inches, but in feet. Shade tobacco plants thrive in this kind of sandy, well-aerated and well-drained soil because it can set its roots down deep. If the soil gets too muddy, though, shade plants are likely to develop root problems. "Tobacco doesn't like wet feet," says LaMondia. The fine sand leeches rainwater away and, combined with a microclimate of periodic rains and hot, humid summers, creates ideal conditions for growing tobacco.

The microclimate and quality of the Valley's soil is one of the main reasons why colonists first settled the area in 1633. The settlers saw Mohawk Indians collecting and smoking wild, native tobacco that naturally grew along the river. The Mohawks taught the settlers how to cultivate the plant, and by 1640, a type of tobacco varietal called shoestring was being sent along trade routes down the Connecticut River

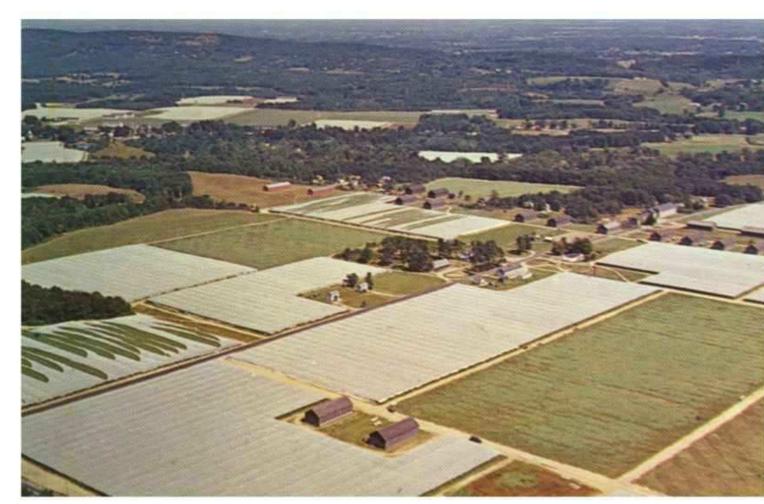
as a cash crop, used to purchase items that could not be produced on a farm as well as pay taxes.

A mid-1600s law that prohibited Connecticut residents from using tobacco grown outside the state created the area's first boom. Most of the tobacco at this time was either being chewed or smoked in a pipe, but by the early 1800s, consumers began shifting to cigars. Broadleaf and Havana varietals were introduced to the region, where they flourished. Around the turn of the 20th century, a new type of tobacco called Sumatra started appearing in the United States, and

the seed varietal was soon being grown in Florida. Tobacco growers in Connecticut knew it would disrupt their market. In response, Connecticut farmers began growing their own version of Sumatra around 1900. They erected elaborate tents made of cheesecloth affixed to cedar posts to mimic the shady growing conditions of Sumatra, an island in modern-day Indonesia. The test crops exceeded expectations, and in turn scientists bred a new tobacco seed that would thrive in such fields. Connecticut shade was born.

Around 1910, the Connecticut shade seed was released to farmers, and the results were spectacular. The new shade had smaller veins than broadleaf, which meant more cigars could be rolled from a single leaf. Shade was also thinner and more pliable, while offering a soft, velvety feel that customers adored. When cured and aged, the green leaf turned into an attractive, golden brown loaded with oils. By 1921, nearly 8,000 acres of genuine, Connecticut shade was harvested in the Valley. More importantly for farmers, shade sold for the highest price per pound compared to any other tobacco grown in the United States.

In the 1940s, annual harvests averaged about 8,800 acres. These high numbers continued through the 1950s, but by the '60s and '70s plantings began to slide. Labor costs rose, pushing many of the smaller growers to switch to less expensive crops; others couldn't resist the developers, and sold their land. By 1979, only



An aerial view from the 1960s showing the expansive shade field tents in the Connecticut River Valley. Around 81,500 acres of shade tobacco was grown in the Valley during that time.

2,720 acres of shade were harvested in total by Valley farmers. Two years later, Consolidated Cigar (now Altadis U.S.A.), once a major grower of Connecticut shade, pulled out as it moved to homogenized sheet wrapper for its mass-market, machine-made cigars. Though Altadis returned to the Valley in 1998, its shade acreage was nowhere near what it used to grow. And while there were small upticks in the late 1990s and in 2012, plantings in the valley continued to decline to the point that shade crop statistics are no longer kept by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today, the only major shade growers left in the Valley are Altadis Shade Co., located in Somers, Connecticut, and the farmers who make up Windsor Shade Tobacco Co., who grow on the west side of the Connecticut River. Jean-Marc Bade, general manager of Windsor Shade since 1989, oversees the sorting, grading and baling of Connecticut shade for buyers. Established in 1937 as a cooperative to pool resources and boost stability, Windsor

Shade has only three members: Dwight Arnold Farms Inc. and S. Arnold & Co., both in Southwick, and the Markowski Farms in West Suffield, Connecticut. It once had 10 members, including the Thralls.

t's a hazy, muggy morning in August in the Connecticut River Valley. It's tough to see farmland past the car dealerships, shopping centers and housing developments, but a visitor can spot the gently rolling hills and loamy soil if he knows where to look.

Save for an 18-hole golf course, the area near S. Arnold & Co. has managed to remain relatively free from development.

"This year, the weather has been near perfect," says owner Stewart Arnold. A gruff, no-nonsense type of a guy, Arnold says the weather has been largely hot and humid, ideal conditions to grow full, healthy tobacco plants. "I can always add water," says Arnold, a third-generation grower. "But it's impossible to take away." Arnold is only growing about 15 acres of shade this year, down from 36 acres two years ago. Walking on a dirt road that divides his shade fields, he says that because the demand for shade is down, he's begun growing broadleaf in order to make a profit. This year, he planted 40 acres, and already he has a buyer.

As he speaks, his son Seth, 28, drives around in a truck to pick up plastic totes resembling postal boxes that the field workers are busily filling with beautiful shade leaves. Each leaf is laboriously picked one by one. Soon after, the leaves will be strung together and festooned on long lines or on short tobacco sticks called laths before being hung on the rafters of a wooden curing barn.

Just down the street, Stewart's brother Donald concurs with the weather report, saying he's expecting a high-quality crop. Standing among the nine-foot-tall shade plants, some poking into the nylon netting, Dwight dodges field workers as he speaks in short sentences, with an avuncular side grin. He's growing about 25 acres of shade this year, down a little from 2018. But he remains optimistic that much of it will be wrapper grade, which can range in price from \$45 to \$50 per pound. And like his brother, Dwight has also diverged into broadleaf and has planted about 40 acres this year.

Brothers Ed and John Markowski, owners of Markowski Farms, are no strangers to broadleaf. The family farm actually started out growing the varietal and then in 1989 they started planting shade "because it was in demand at the time," says Ed. Tall with square shoulders, Ed says that they've dedicated about 250 acres of their fields to broadleaf and about 60 acres to shade. While he wishes to see the demand for shade pick back up, he isn't optimistic.

The modern cigar smoker, though, is not looking to smoke the milder cigars that Connecticut shade typically covers. Instead he wants something stronger.

Looking at the CIGAR AFICIONADO and *Cigar Insider* tasting database, which is a barometer of yearly trends in the humidor, one can clearly see demand has fallen for this type of wrapper. In the first issue of the magazine, published in Autumn 1992, nine of the 17 non-Cuban cigars rated—53 percent—were covered in Connecticut shade. In 1998, we rated 192 cigars made with shade, 21 percent of the total cigars we reviewed that year. And in 2018,

we only rated 25 cigars made with shade, a mere 3.2 percent of the total.

All three of the farmers say that high overhead is the major problem of farming tobacco the Valley. Everything needed to sustain a shade farm—from the cedar posts, to the imported nylon netting and the tobacco barns—simply costs more here. Labor, too. At one point in time, area teenagers worked the field for summer jobs. And while each of these co-op farmers still has a few teenagers on the seasonal workforce, the majority are brought in

"This year, the weather has been near perfect. I can always add water, but it's impossible to take away."



Workers at the S. Arnold & Co. farm sew together individual shade tobacco leaves using a continuous string machine.

from Jamaica and Puerto Rico. The workers are provided housing and are paid around \$14 an hour. For comparison, workers in Ecuador, which grows its own version of Connecticut shade, do the same job but get paid a little over \$3 per hour.

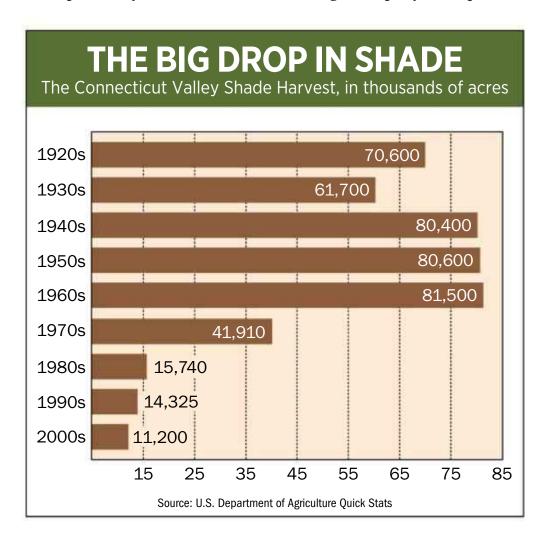
Curing barns also run high in the States. Building a new barn in the Valley can run between \$100,000 to \$230,000. Each of the farmers noted that lack of space to properly cure is one reason they hold back on planting more acres of shade. All total, the cost to build and maintain a working shade tobacco farm ranges from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per acre. Competition from countries such as Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua, which all grow their own versions of Connecticut shade, is also a major problem. Not necessarily for wrapper, but for shade that falls into the binder and filler grade category and will end up on machine-made cigars. The lower grades from Connecticut are considerably more expensive than from other countries.



Rows and rows of shade tobacco leaves hang in a barn on the S. Arnold & Co. farm. The leaves will cure in the barn for at least 40 days, developing a golden brown color.

"The farmers [in Connecticut] have to sell every leaf. Every. Leaf," repeats Rich Dolak, the Connecticut tobacco buyer for both Arturo Fuente and J.C. Newman for the last 20 years. "That's so they can make money. They are in a global market for that lower-grade stuff and they are getting killed. . . . It's not that the tobacco's not great. It's that they are competing globally with these low-cost providers. And they are getting hammered."

Dolak remembers farms that he once visited that just aren't there anymore. "When I go up there now, it's a housing development. I never thought I'd see it in my lifetime, but I'm seeing it. And it's a shame. I'm shocked. The demise is unbelievable." He also believes that when General Cigar closed its Connecticut farms in the early 2000s, it was a huge blow to the region. "The valley lost its champion," says Dolak, who saw the large company as important



because they would purchase low-grade tobacco for their own machine-made products.

Ernest Gocaj, who used to oversee those farms and is now the director of tobacco procurement of General Cigar Co., still buys a lot of tobacco from Windsor Shade for use on General's popular Macanudo Café brand, as well as lower priming leaves (which are lighter) for Macanudo Gold Label. The company also uses Connecticut shade as binder for some of its cigars. "There's no place in the world you can find the same aroma and taste," says Gocaj. "Hopefully we are never going to get out of the Valley. We are going to stick with shade wrapper forever, unless the growers decide [to stop]. But as long as they grow even five acres, we will buy."

Dolak, too, says the Fuentes and Newmans will continue to support Windsor Shade. "What we like to remember is that we really are a partnership between the farmer and the manufacturer.

Because if you grind a farmer too much, in the end they are going to go out of business and then what do you have? It's not an unlimited supply. You kind of got to be there for them in the tough years, and they'll be there for us in a good year."

Still, some cigarmakers have already switched to versions of Connecticut shade leaf from other countries. Davidoff is perhaps the most famous to make the switch. In 2001, the Dominican cigarmaker changed its signature wrapper on legacy brands such as Davidoff Special R, Aniversario and Grand Cru from Connecticut shade to Ecuador Connecticut. Romeo y Julieta Vintage also moved to Ecuador in the mid-2000s, as well as the La Gloria Cubana Wavell Maduro.

Connecticut-seed tobacco grown in Ecuador is quite similar in appearance and flavor to Connecticut shade, but the leaf is grown in the open sunlight, rather than under shade tenting. The near-constant cloud cover in the region of Ecuador where the tobacco is grown negates the need for shade, reducing cost. Many cigar-makers say the same thing about Ecuador Connecticut: it's cheaper and more consistent than genuine Connecticut shade.

Bade says that the co-op has taken some actions to help cut costs. At one time the sorting and grading was done in Connecticut, but now it's done in a facility in Santiago, Dominican Republic. The building was once owned by the co-op but ASP Enterprises Inc., which cultivates Connecticut-seed wrapper in Ecuador, bought the facility, now called ASP Santiago, in April 2013 after the co-op's volume began to drop. According to David Perez, president and CEO of ASP Enterprises, Windsor Shade will "use the facility for three to four months or whatever time they need to sort their tobacco, and I use it the other months of the year. It's a very friendly atmosphere."

While Bade and the Windsor Shade farmers toeing the Connecticut shade line understand that the market is shifting away from shade, they still believe in the crop. "We've always focused on quality, but more than ever, our market is the premium market," says Bade. "We just have to work on growing the best tobacco we can." •

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he distressing news came to Paul Huston from the Davidoff Cigar Lounge of Greenwich (Connecticut) in an e-mail: "Unfortunately, the lounge is closing at the end of the month." That same night, half the membership had gathered at

the club to commiserate. "Everyone was saying, 'How did this happen? We should have figured out a way,' "recalls Huston. "It was like an Irish wake."

Relating his seemingly tragic story almost two years later, the chairman of a private equity firm, with his boyish platinum hair, angular face and dignified, patrician demeanor, is curiously upbeat. Maybe because of the plot twist that turned the tale around.

As Huston sat among the mourners in the ill-fated club, an

How a seeming disaster prompted one cigar lover to create a smoking sanctum of his own

BY KENNETH SHOULER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA BARISONZI

idea flamed. Adjacent to his home on his three-acre property in the toney suburb of New York City was a carriage house, though it sheltered no horses. It had sat empty for two years. "I'm there smoking a cigar, drinking my Scotch," he says. "I texted my wife, Linda: 'I think I know what I want for

our anniversary. We should build the cigar lounge over the garage in the carriage house.' It didn't take her 20 seconds to text back to me. 'I love that idea—let's do it.'"

Today, through the support of his wife, a self-described female with testosterone, and the designs of Vincent Sciarretta, a local builder of mansions, Huston is now ensconced in the man cave of his dreams. Where once there was a mouse-infested storage room for patio furniture and Christmas decorations, a combination cigar

parlor and theater for sporting events stands.

Huston, who envisioned a lounge that mimicked the sophisticated look of his former club, is pointing out the details of the realization of his plan. The porcelain floor appears like beach wood. The grayish barn-wood walls climb high to a cathedral ceiling. "Just because you are smoking cigars, you don't want it to look like a dungeon," he says. Dimmable, low-voltage puck lighting brightens his lounge just enough. An \$8,000 Rabbit Air purifier stops any smoke clouds from hanging.

"It's got to be cool, airy and bright," says Sciarretta, owner of VAS construction in nearby Darien. "You want to be in a happy spot."

That happy spot is now popularly called a man cave, a part of the vernacular that casts a wide net. It evokes many images from a



Paul Huston transformed his carriage house in Greenwich, Connecticut—which was an underused, mouse-infested storage room—into his own personal cigar lounge.

room with a card table, shadowy and barely visible through a haze of smoke, up through dens with pool tables or pinball machines, all the way to a professionally designed retreat.

But the term also conveys a revolt against feminization, a last bastion of masculinity. The designer of his own male quarters is saying in essence, 'My authority has been usurped by my wife and kids in the rest of the house, so I am taking back some real estate.' Hence man caves lack any fuchsia shades, throw pillows, lacy curtains or doilies beneath porcelain bowls. All are unwelcome in cave land, lest it be confused with a she-shed.

Any auxiliary use of the space must also be male friendly.

Paul gestures to the television on the wall, which delivers football to the sanctum. Its 75-inch monitor stretches out as long as a billiard table, with surround-sound audio reverberating off the walls. "No one ever complains that the television is too big," Linda laughs. The esthetics are impeccable: the black hue of the fireplace mirrors that of the television. The sound system is first

rate. A combination of a couch and club chairs create the effect of stadium seating for 12.

While few have the real estate—or means—to match Huston, it's not the size that counts. Be it one room—a remodeled den or garage, guest room or basement—any space can constitute a man cave. What's essential is that the man molds it to his will and his tastes. There are man caves with putting greens, bars, kegerators, vending machines, boxing rings. One guy even turned his room into a Mets clubhouse. Another went for a medieval castle look.

Perhaps nothing has demonstrated—or for that matter jump started—the man cave movement so much as the television show "Man Caves." Produced from 2007 to 2016 by the DIY Network, it featured Tony Siragusa and Jason Cameron. The reality show

provided masculine makeovers for properties in need, many of them belonging to celebrities. Cameron brought the building talent, while Siragusa, a 350-pound defensive lineman from the NFL champion Baltimore Ravens, brought star power. He would make suggestions (read: break balls), while chatting up the likes of Charlie Sheen and Snoop Dog, but Siragusa rarely held a hammer.

Sheen was likely the most famous recipient of a man cave, courtesy of the show. His Beverly Hills mansion had an octagonal room with a forlorn bar where no one ever gathered for cocktails. Time to upgrade. Sheen was into it. "If you're a real man, it's a spot you've got to have to be away from all things unmanly," he told them.

Grand entrance doors were required. "If it doesn't weigh 1,000 pounds and it's not two inches thick, we don't use it," Cameron explained, describing the massive castle doors. A secret door behind a wall opened to a walkin humidor with "Sheen's Cigars" emblazoned on the glass. In time, the crew constructed a custom cabinet for 600 bottles of wine. Alongside sat two plug-in humidors. When the makeover was revealed at the episode's con-

clusion, an overwhelmed Sheen hugged Siragusa and sank into his leather chair. "Who's got it better than me?"

Much of the show's drama came from the wives' efforts to impose their own visions on the final product. "It's not supposed to be what the woman wants," Siragusa said at the time. "Sometimes the woman will come by as we're finishing up and say, 'Oh, we're going to change this.'"

No such problem beset Paul Huston's makeover. "As long as I'm in my space, if my wife wants to come in, that's fine. The nature of the place is that we smoke and watch sporting events," he says. "We don't have that many women who smoke, but they don't mind smelling the aroma. At the Super Bowl, three women watched the game, sitting in the back over there."

Paul also wanted the new space to recall the lost cigar club. "We tried to get as close as we could to the color of the [brown] chairs," Paul says, "I love the fact that the arms are flat, so you can put your drinks on them." A sign outside warns "Members Only."





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Left, the staircase leading to Huston's cigar lounge. Right, Huston, Michael Cafagno and designer Vincent Sciarretta enjoying cigars in the new space.

In fact, Paul invited some former members and offered them "membership" at his place. "We now have 10 members," he says, showing off the velvety, maroon smoking jackets worn by members. The room was finished just before New England's win over Los Angeles in the Super Bowl in February. "You should have seen the Super Bowl with people wearing those jackets."

To enter, you use a code on a keypad. Even then, a peephole latch on an old speakeasy-style door awaits you. "The membership is predominantly football fans, mostly Giants fans, and my friend's son-in-law is a Patriots fan," Paul adds. "But the four-digit code that everyone has to memorize is a very memorable Giants football game." Savage.

Inside are two sprawling murals, cityscapes that once hung in the old lounge. Paul says that members are also expected to bring a gift, and gestures to a portrait as an example.

If the popular term "man cave" seems ominous or unbefitting some of the luxurious examples of the genre, consider what John Cena insists on calling his retreat: Gentleman's Room. In a series of videos called "Our Home: John & Nikki," the rapper/wrestler/ actor/pitchman and champion of the Make-A-Wish Foundation welcomed viewers into the Land O' Lakes, Florida, mansion he shared with his then girlfriend, Nikki Bella, also a professional wrestler. As well as providing for an opulent pool, a master bedroom with mirrored ceilings, a massive dressing room and a music area, they dedicated a "leftover unused room" to cigar smoking. It's a stately array of dark leather chairs, two televisions and several chess sets, suitable for watching sports and for spirited conversation. Just below the coiffured ceilings, a shelf encircles the room, holding the colorful helmets of the defunct XFL football teams. There are two humidors and a ventilation system that keeps the smoke from going to the rest of the house.

Whatever the room, having cigars on hand is key. Back in Huston's clubroom in Greenwich, there's no shortage of smokes. A glass humidor that would make a refrigerator look small is stocked with Montecristos, Partagas, Avos, Padróns, Davidoff Limited Editions and more. Paul and Vincent fire up Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series smokes. "When I was just getting into cigars, I went to a cigar store in New York and he recommended the '64 Anniversary Series," Paul says. Later, he moved to other choices, but he tends to go mild as the hour grows late. "A strong one makes it tough to sleep at night."

Having one's own room for smoking is becoming more important. "Unfortunately, with the regulations there are less places you can smoke. And for people like myself who are avid smokers—when you get to the winter months here in the Northeast, where do you go to have a cigar?"

Huston had one more design requirement: nonporous surfaces. The decision was spawned, he says, by his experience as a member of a New York City cigar club: "It's a wonderful place. But many of their couches and chairs are like suede cloth and they have carpet and the big velvet curtains—so as good as their [aeration] system is, you always smell smoke. So I wanted stone, wood, glass and metal." Monetary outlay was of minor concern. Final cost? "In my head," he says, "I had a number that I thought was \$75,000 to \$100,000." It actually came to \$250,000.

"I've done them for \$50,000—converting a room in someone's house," Sciarretta explains. "But then you start including furnishings, the aeration, humidors, fire place, paintings—that's easily \$100,000. So the number is \$250,000."

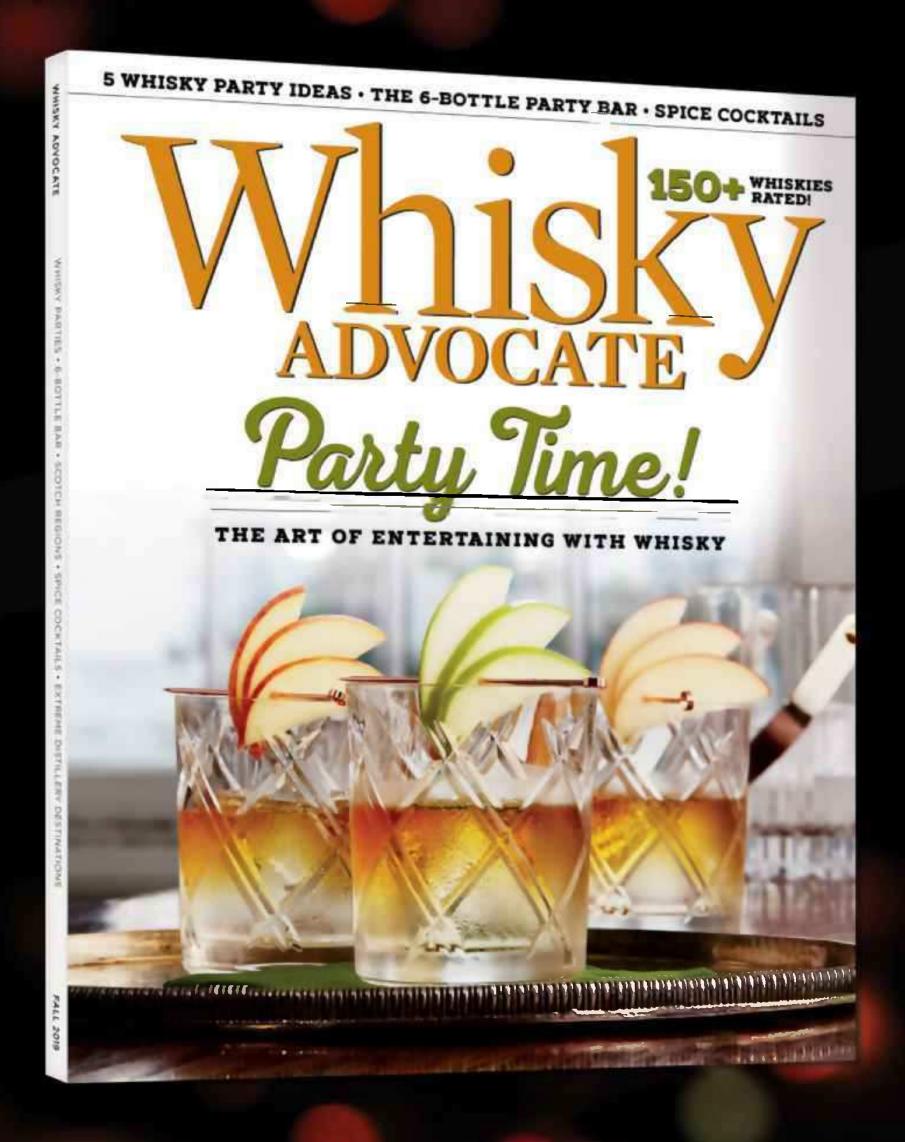
Another way to look at the project is as a sales feature when it comes time to divest of the property. "With too much inventory on the market in housing, having a separate cigar lounge could be the factor that gets a sale," says Sciarretta, an award-winning builder. "In this market in Greenwich and Fairfield County, where the upper houses aren't moving as quickly, unique features are what will get buyers [interested]."

So in a way, Huston can look at his man cave as another investment—that or the best anniversary present he ever had. ❖

Kenneth Shouler is a frequent contributor to CIGAR AFICIONADO.

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Cuban cigars you should be buying today by Gordon mott

Tou are standing in front of shelves full of Cuban cigars in a Casa del Habano. The yellow and black cases or varnished, mahogany wood cabinets or lithographed boxes of well-known brands are stacked there: Cohiba, Montecristo, H. Upmann, Partagás, Hoyo de Monterrey. You grab a wooden cabinet of Cohibas, because they are Cohibas, Cuba's most famous brand. You crack open the seal, slide back the lid, stick your nose down into the box and take a deep breath; you smell the mix of aged tobacco with the aromas of cedar, earth and spices. You inhale deeply and imagine those cigars in your humidor.

But what next? Is the box of Cohibas better than the box of Montecristos? Is the H. Upmann Sir Winston as great a smoke as the Punch Double Corona? Are the Hoyo de Monterreys really worth more than a box of Diplomaticos? Those are questions every cigar lover asks as they get ready to buy boxes of Cuban cigars, either to smoke now or to lay down in their humidors.

CIGAR AFICIONADO wants to make your choice a bit easier. During 2019, we have rated dozens of Cuban cigars, and based on the scores from our blind tastings, we have chosen the top 10. All of the cigars on the list have scored between 92 and 94 points. Nearly every cigar is available in the markets today from Havana to London, or in specific countries like Mexico, because the cigars are Regional Editions. We will also give you the top 10 from 2018, as well as a couple of cigars from our Top 25 tasting in 2018. We won't quote prices here because they vary dramatically based on local taxes from market to market.

Before we dive into the specifics of the 10 cigars on the 2019 list, we want to emphasize that the tobacco in current production is the best in nearly five years. The majority of the tobacco in current-market cigars comes from the growing seasons of 2016–17 and 2017–18. Each of those crop years, which means tobacco that was planted in October and November, and harvested from late January to March, has been some of the best tobacco Cuba has produced in this century. After catastrophic rains and poor weather conditions in the previous three crops before 2015, the



These Cuban cigars are smoking superbly, from left to right: Punch Double Corona (94 points); Bolivar Corona Junior (93 points); Montecristo Petit Edmundo (93 points); H. Upmann No. 2 (92 points).

tobacco now being rolled for current-production cigars is of very good to excellent quality and the results can be found in the cigars. The crop of 2018–19, which is still aging, was also of very high quality and that means the current good cigar quality should continue for several more years.

But back to the list. The 2019 version includes four of the major global brands produced by Habanos S.A.—Cohiba, Hoyo de Monterrey, H. Upmann and Montecristo, and then three smaller brands considered to be of less importance: Bolivar, Juan Lopez and Punch. In 2018, Partagás, another global brand, made the top 10 list with two different cigars, along with three others, including two Cohibas, a Hoyo de Monterrey and two H. Upmanns. In 2018, three of the second-tier brands also joined the top 10 list: Diplomaticos, Punch and Vegas Robaina. The only global brand, which is a new designation instituted by Habanos S.A. this year, not represented in these lists is Romeo y Julieta.

Let's start with Cohiba, which is the best known and in some sizes, the most sought after by collectors and connoisseurs. The Cohibas from 2019 on the list include one of the iconic sizes in the brand, the Robusto (93 points), 4 7/8 inches by 50 ring. You can't

go wrong with this cigar; one of the greatest older robustos was from the 1992 vintage, a powerhouse when it was smoked nearly 25 years later. The Cohiba Behike BHK 52 (94 points, see page 134), a pigtailed robusto, is considered to be the pinnacle of Cohiba's production, but it's a very tough find. The Siglo VI (93 points), at 5 7/8 by 52, is simply one of the best Cohibas made. This cigar is filled with woody notes, and a hint of vanilla—it also begs to be smoked down to the knuckle-burning stage. In general, CIGAR AFICIONADO considers Cohiba a medium to full-bodied cigar in most sizes, in part because tobaccos used in the brand are aged longer than some other Cuban brands, producing a smooth but powerful smoke.

Montecristo comes up next, partly because it is the largest-selling Cuban cigar brand in the world.

The Petit Edmundo (93 points) is a delicious, well-balanced cigar. While the iconic No. 2, a pirámide, can often show full-bodied strength, the Edmundo series, which includes the Petit Edmundo, the Edmundo and the Double Edmundo, are good choices if you're looking for a classic, mediumbodied Cuban cigar. The Petit Edmundo is 4 3/8 by 52, which is a great size for a quick afternoon smoke, and is filled with hints of coffee bean and dark chocolate.

There are two Hoyo de Monterrey sizes in the 2019 list. The Epicure No. 2, a robusto size, nearly 5 by 50, scored 92 points. Apart from the Hoyo Double Corona, this is probably the best known, and one of the most consistently great sizes in the Hoyo lineup. Known primarily as a mild to mediumstrength brand, the Epicure showed a lot of flavor with floral and nutty elements, some leather and toasted almond on the mid-palate and a pleasantly sweet finish. The other Hoyo in the 2019 lineup is the Río Seco, which is part of the new Le Hoyo line extensions. The Río Seco is more full-bodied than the regular Hoyo cigars, and at 5 1/2 by 56, is also one of thickest sizes in the entire Habanos portfolio. It scored 94 points, and the complex smoke was filled with notes of cinnamon, nutmeg and wood all leading to a rich, caramel finish.

The final global brand in the list is the H. Upmann No. 2, the same pirámide shape as a Montecristo No. 2. These cigars fall into the medium-strength range, although the Upmann No. 2 shape tends to come across as much stronger because the tapered head concentrates the smoke. This is always a great substitute if you are a Monte No. 2 fan. It scored 92 points, and with a core of sweetness, still delivered solid notes of almonds and leather. A real keeper.

The true gems in the 2019 lineup are from the so-called second-tier brands, now classified by Habanos as "portfolio brands." Cigars in this second tier can be some of the best smokes in the entire Cuban portfolio, and potentially some of the best values. The Punch Double Corona (94 points), 7 5/8 by 49, is a powerhouse with notes of cedar, coffee bean and a long chocolate finish. This cigar always has long aging potential in good vintage years, like the ones on the market right now. Considered medium to full-bodied, this is a smoke for a long, late night with a glass of

Cognac or aged rum. The Punch Duke, (93 points), a Mexican Regional Edition is also a great smoke. It's a well-balanced 5 1/2 by 54 cigar with medium strength, and continues the trend of great Mexican Regional Editions. The cigar is floral and nutty with leather and dried red fruit on the finish.

The other two 2019 second-tier cigars are quite different in style, but each worth tracking down. The Bolivar brand is considered one of the most consistently full-bodied cigars from Cuba. The Bolivar Coronas Junior (93 points), 4 3/8 by 42, is a wonderful

small smoke, just right to accompany a morning

The Cohiba Behike BHK 52 is a top-tier Cuban cigar, and scored 94 points. espresso or after a meal—assuming you're looking for a quick, full-bodied experience. It has a leathery, earthy core with strong coffee bean notes, and a long chocolate finish.

The Juan Lopez Selección No. 2 (94 points), a 4 7/8 by 50 robusto, is a relatively low-production cigar, but has always been one of our favorites, falling in the medium to full strength range.

It's often found in cabinets of 25, a great way to age a cigar. These have a solid spicy, cedary character with layers of raisin and chocolate that hint

of leather and chestnut.

The top 10 cigars from 2018 are interesting, but there are three, including one from the year's Top 25 rankings, that stand out: the H. Upmann

Sir Winston (94 points), a classic Churchill at 7 by 47. This is one of the most elegant large cigars in the Cuban cigar universe. It's a medium-bodied smoke that delivers a lot of sweet, creamy and coffee flavors, and is one of our favorites. Another standout is the Diplomaticos No. 2 (92 points), which many connoisseurs consider the equal to its pirámide shaped cousin, the Montecristo No. 2. Diplomaticos is a medium to-fullbodied brand, and one we personally look for whenever we're in a Casa del Habano, or in Havana. It possesses unique sweet-andsavory qualities with hints of wood and chocolate-covered almonds. The Quai d'Orsay No. 54, 5 3/8 by 54, deserves your attention too. Once a regional brand for France, the Quai d'Orsay line was relaunched in 2017 and now reaches a broad, global market. Each encounter with them has been a real treat. It's another combination of sweet and savory, and we feel it has great aging potential. On top of everything else, it's a good value.

There are some other great Cuban smokes available in the market today. Although they don't all necessarily receive the top-echelon scores in our tastings, the Añejados line (which Habanos ages for many years before release) has turned into a wonderful, well-aged smoke. The first Añejados releases, the Romeo y Julieta Pirámides (92 points) and the Montecristo Churchill (91 points), were unfairly dismissed by many connoisseurs, but several recent samples have opened up and are smoking beautifully.

Finally, if you are buying these cigars today, consider laying them down for a year or so. They are smoking great today, but they will get better with a little time in your humidor. ❖

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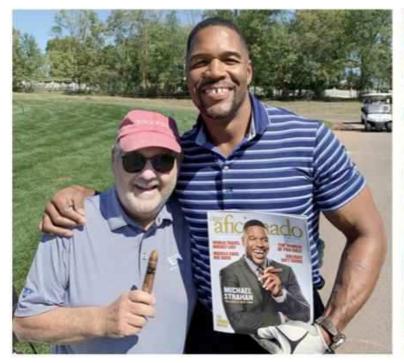
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Marvin R. Shanken presents Giants great Michael Strahan with a La Flor Dominicana football cigar (and a copy of the December 2014 issue) in Bedminster, New Jersey.



With cigars, cocktails and refreshing sea breezes, Mags, Ernest, Beth, Marc, Cat and Kyle Straun, and Melissa and Teddy Parham celebrate a family reunion at their dear friend Erin Harvey's new favorite beach house in Cape Charles, Virginia.



Laura Olson and Ryan Begley (both center) light up some cigars with their wedding party and family at Valley View Farm in Williamsburg, Massachusetts.



Rusty Walker, Greg Griffin, Kevin Downs, Derek Monjure, Greg Beadles and James Cain from Dacula, Georgia, at the Hotel Nacional in Havana.



Armando Cappuccio, Giancarlo Maresca, Vincenzo Gonnella and Fabio Bove of The Knights Order of Nine Doors at an event in Bologna, Italy.



Judge Eugene J. Fierro and his wife Dayle, from Miami, Florida, make a stop at the Marcus Daniel Tobacconist shop in Naples, Florida.



PGA professional Dan Rettig, Jesse Ando and George Schadt take a post-dinner break to relax with cocktails and cigars at Corona Cigar Bar in Orlando, Florida.



Atop Harney Peak in South Dakota, Camryn Huber celebrates her 18th birthday by lighting up with brothers Jon-Erik and Brandon.



Brian Nazar and Rick Delorme from Winnipeg Manitoba, Canada, enjoy Cuban cigars and aged rum at the Hotel Nacional in Havana, Cuba.



Fraternity brothers Anton Durrah, Rick Douglas and Jeffery Black from Charlotte, North Carolina, at the Kappa Alpha Psi alumni Christmas party.



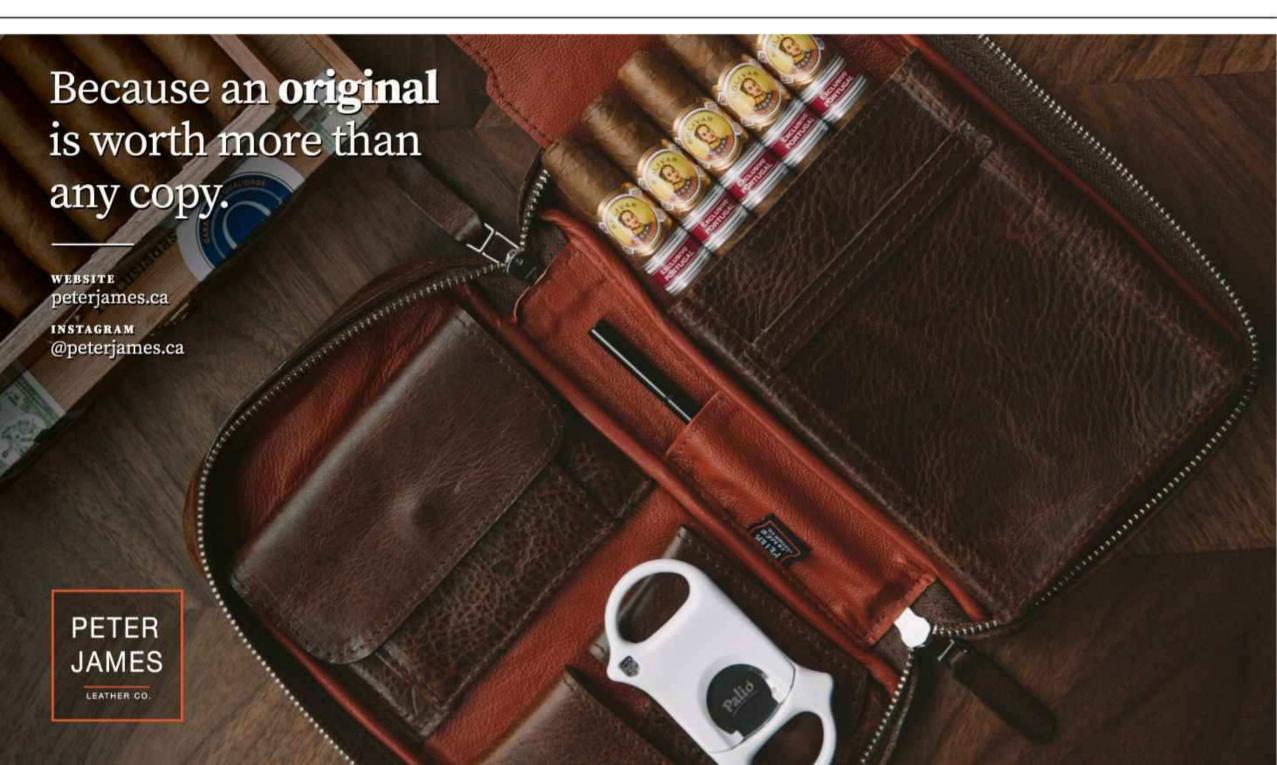
Scott Geuther, Robert Sample, Dan Geuther, Steven Warneke and Jim Geuther at the wedding of Megan Geuther and Matt Chauvin in Houston, Texas.

Brandon Plattner and Derek Hermann sample fine cigars at the annual Gentlemen's Cigar Society Summit in West Peoria, Illinois.





Hunter Knapp, Joe Osten, Mike Kozel, Ed Grimm, Chuck Sallusti, Scott Stachowski, Bruce Herrick, Mark Riley, Craig Fitzgerald, Garrel Curry, Richard "Doc" Brand and Scot Derrenberry while attending The Open Championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club in Portrush, United Kingdom.

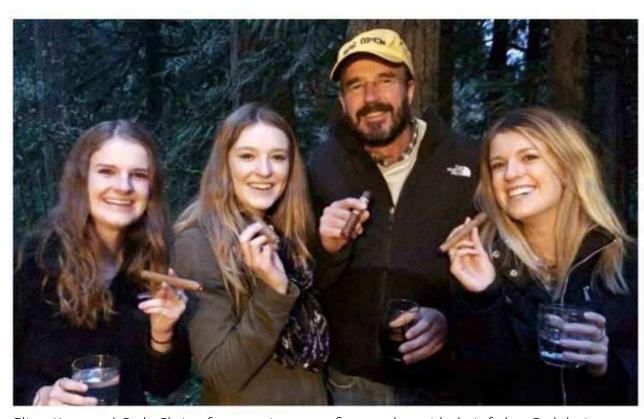




David and Annalisa DiNucci sample cigars and wine while at Marina del Rey's Havana Café Cigar Night in The Bronx, New York.



Robert Revoir and Austine Lacey Kelly of Point Pleasant, New Jersey, smoke Nub cigars as they sail around the Jersey shore.



Elise, Kate, and Carly Christoferson enjoy some fine smokes with their father Carl during a lovely evening at their second home in Zig-Zag, Oregon.



Longtime friends and coworkers, Rick Spika and Rich Sticka of Campton Hills, Illinois, make merry during the holidays.



Alton Richards and Andrew Lewis enjoy a summer evening in New York City, puffing away on a rooftop in Queens.



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Dave Sanders, Ryan McKinney, Mark B. Logan, Madison and Russell McKinney, Wyatt McKinney, Don McKinney and Donovan McKinney at Madison and Russell's wedding in Fullerton, California.



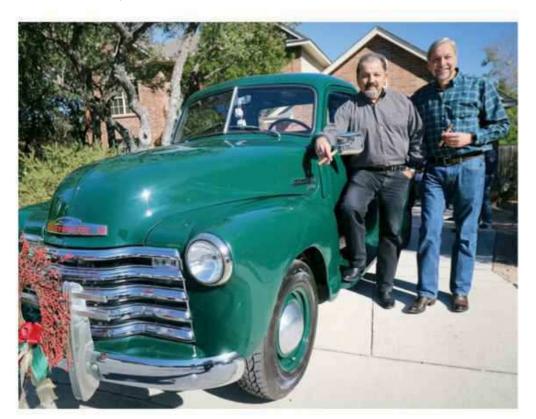
Tim Campbell never needs to leave his house again. He christens his beautiful new home cigar lounge in Chicago, Illinois, with his father William and his twin brother William.



Retired SWAT officers Malcolm Allan, Gary Godziuk, Todd Laycock, Randy Loxterkamp (sitting), Neil Dubord, Dave Berry, Kevin Galvin and Darcy Strang in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.



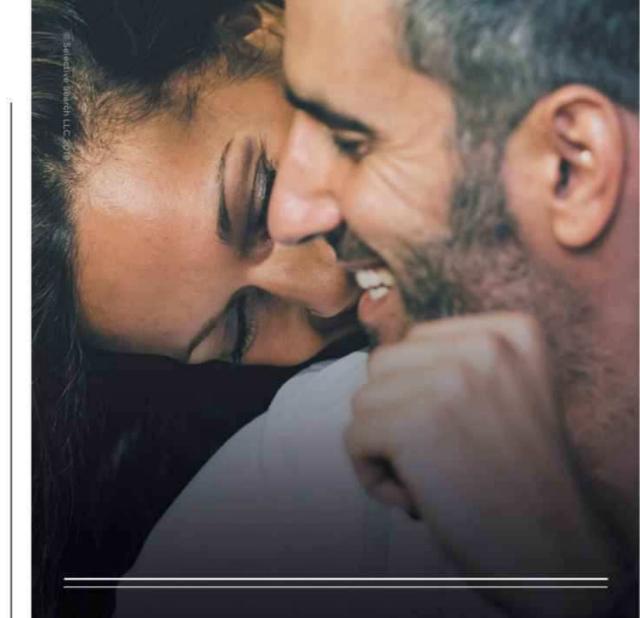
DeEtte and Gil Amspaugh enjoy Martinis and prepare to indulge in fine cigars while celebrating DeEtte's 60th birthday at Keens Steakhouse in New York City.



Brothers Robert and Richard Garcia from San Antonio, Texas, honor the restoration of their grandfather's 1949 Chevrolet 3600 with OpusX cigars.



Michael Fasulo, Paul Axelrad, Randy Elo and Mike Boissoneault have a smoke on Arthur Avenue in The Bronx, New York City's "real" Little Italy.



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EXECUTIVE SEARCH MEETS PERSONAL MATCHMAKING



Lee, Jordan and David Edelstein, Asher Anidjar, David Rodberg and Marc Etkin celebrate David's 60th birthday in Freehold, New Jersey.



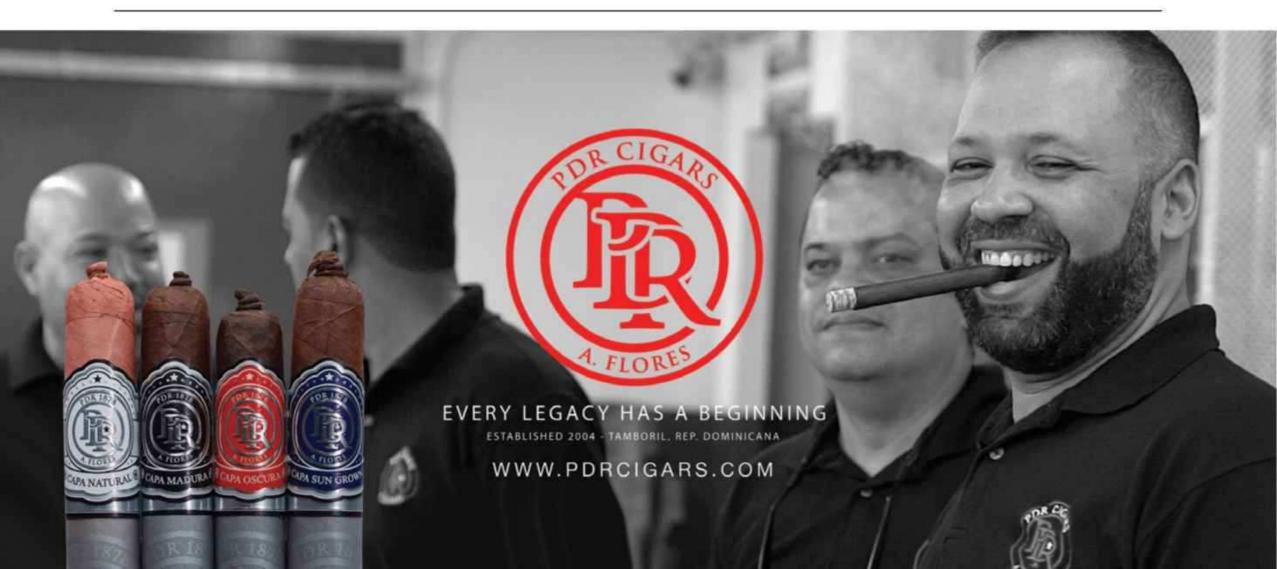
Dave Cribbs, Mark Sankovich and Jim Sharp from Clackamas, Oregon, take a cigar break on a fishing trip on Christmas Island in the South Pacific.



Dennis Ochs and his cigar-loving friends break out the Cubans for a whiskey tasting he hosted at his home in St. Louis, Missouri.



Mark Hinterberg, newlyweds David Gershan and Megha Hamal, John Sabbagh and Dr. Robert Gershan savor Cuban cigars as they tour Kathmandu, Nepal.





Nick Mikus and Bob Zendler watching the Army vs. Navy game at Nick's Ristorante in Huntsville, Alabama.



Pittsburgh Pirates 1960 World Series champs Elroy Face (left) and Dick Groat (right) with Rudy Hudale in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.



Tom Bo, Zac Aharon, Joe Pash, Marc Schiff, Kevin Moya, Mark Lefebvre, Jim Canole, Frank Filiberto, Mario Oliveira, Michele Kelly and Joe Sablow at Tom's weekly poker game in Melbourne, Florida.



Makeisha and Miguel Barnes of New Orleans, Louisiana, spend their wedding anniversary in cigar bliss at the Big Smoke Las Vegas.



Dennis and Marsha Losey join in the Mardi Gras festivities in New Orleans with some Arturo Fuente Short Story cigars.





Daniel Sacco (second right) of Toronto, Canada, enjoys fine smokes on his wedding night at the Villa La Selva in Tuscany, Italy.



Mitch and his father, Chris Mahoney honor the momentous occasion of Mitch becoming a U.S. citizen with Montecristo cigars in Chicago, Illinois.



Michael and Sara Mandy from Brooklyn, New York, enjoy the much anticipated celebration on their wedding day in Newport, Rhode Island. To honor the special occasion, the groom's father provided family and friends with a large selection of Cuban Montecristo cigars.



Cousins Brigadier General Kenneth Hubbard and Attorney G. Hubbard Smalls honor the General's 30 years of service in Fort Myer, Arlington, Virginia.



Friends Scott Parsons, Cory Nixon, Kim Berger, Dean Zuppe and Lenny Kiec kick off the Pittsburgh Steelers' pre-season in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania.



Bill Kirkwood (center) from Panama City, Florida, takes a stroll on the beach with his sons Ethan and Colin while on vacation in Rosemary Beach, Florida.



Valerie Mudek from Duluth, Minnesota, Lily Frickel from Ridgefield, Connecticut, and Gracie Bozick from Manhattan, at Club Macanudo in New York City.



Three generations getting together to savor a smoke is always a celebration: Matthew, Chuck and Drew Bandusky at home in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin.



Joe Lokis and his father-in-law Jimmy Brown enjoy a couple of good cigars while golfing at Stone Creek Golf Course in Portland, Oregon.

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In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

A HIT WITH YOUR MITT—FC GOODS

Men finding it difficult to part ways with their old childhood baseball glove now have an option that allows their memories to live on. FC Goods has teamed up with Korchmar, a 102-year-old leather goods crafter, to offer a program that repurposes ball gloves from yesteryear into custom, one-of-a-kind leather products. Send them your treasured glove and in about three weeks the leather artisans will have transformed it into a highly personalized card case, billfold or money clip. Prices start at \$75 and include shipping. *fcgoods.com*

2 RIGHT HEAT FOR THE MEAT—MEATER BLOCK

You're cooking holiday prime rib, but your crowd likes it rare, medium and well-done? Check out the Meater Block, a wireless cooking thermometer that charges four separate probes for separate degrees of doneness—or even different meats. Working on Bluetooth or Wi-Fi, the probes are truly wireless (no ungainly cable connecting to the unit outside the oven). The device (\$269, from Apption Labs) reads temperatures on smart phone, smart watch or the bright OLED display on the Block itself. The probes also measure ambient heat of the oven along with the internal heat of the meat. *meater.com*

3 CHARMING CARD HOLDER—ETTINGER

Ettinger has been making leather goods in the United Kingdom for 85 years, and it prides itself on quality and patience: it takes more than five years to train a new craftsperson. The company's Sterling Flat credit card case (£115, or \$160) is a simple example of the company's style. Made with a combination of red and black calf leathers, the piece sports four card pockets, plus a holder for receipts or a few bills, just right for a night out without the bulk of a large wallet. ettinger.co.uk

4 DASH MEETS CRAFT—GALLERY SOLLANDS

So often the trade-off with contemporary furniture is that it doesn't come with Old World craftsmanship and durability. Not so with London's Gallery Sollands. The colorful and innovative Gra Collection, from Grazyna Solland, is on display in Mayfair, but built at Solland's atelier in the Norfolk countryside by traditional British craftsmen. The unabashedly contemporary works were chosen to furnish this year's New York's Salon Art + Design fair (Nov. 14-18). sollands.co.uk and thesalonny.com

5 STOVETOP SPEED—HESTAN

What do performance cars and topflight cookware have in common? A need for speed. Stovetop pots and pans should heat up and cool down quickly at the whim of the chef. ProBond cookware from Italy's Hestan, uses a cold-forging process and triple-ply construction that puts steel where it needs to be to guarantee even heating and optimize responsiveness. Walls are thinner, and bases and rims are thicker. Sandwiched between stainless-steel layers is an aluminum core. A 10-piece set (currently \$799.95 on discount) covers everything from skillet to sauce to stock. hestanculinary.com

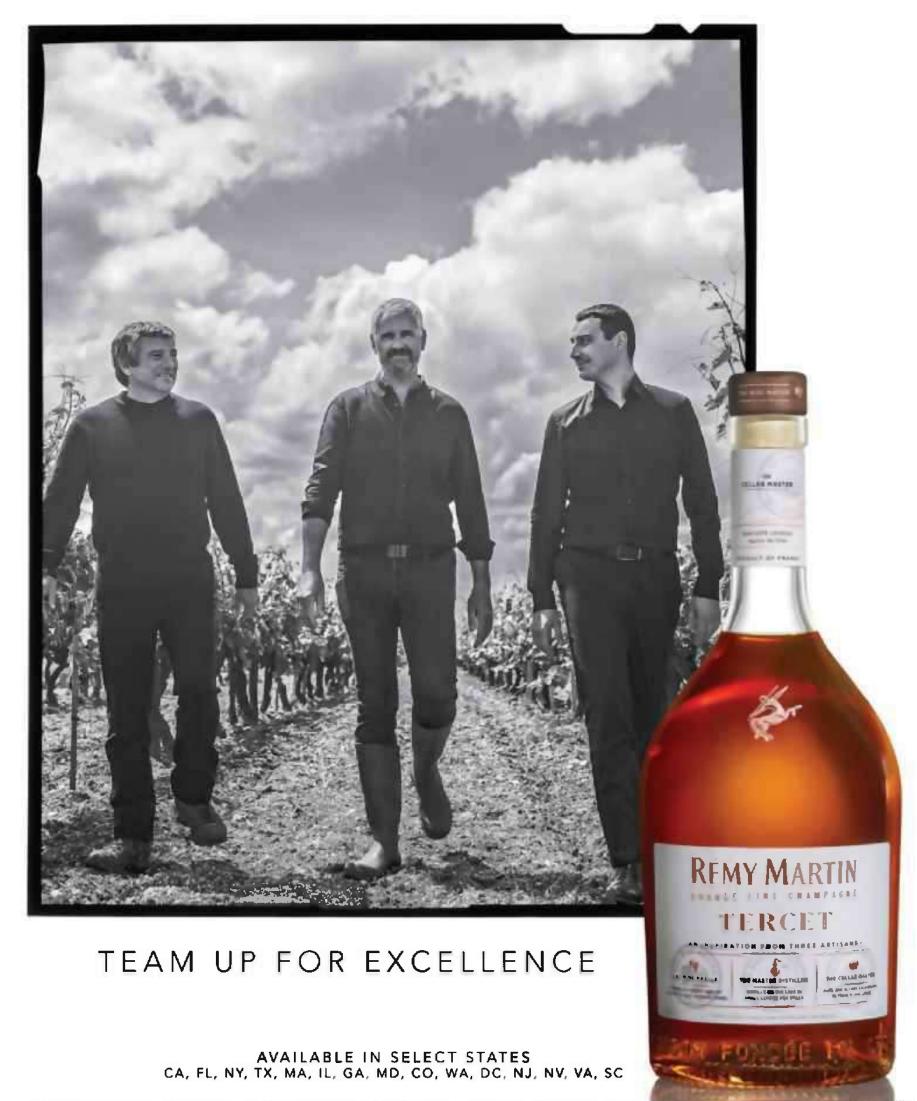
6 PRESSURE ON TAP—GROWLERWERKS

The ability to fill large-format containers (growlers) from the tap at many breweries is one of the best advancements of the craft beer culture. The downside is it forces you to drink up fast or lose the fizz. The Pressurized Growler Keg from GrowlerWerks takes off the pressure to drink up fast by keeping the pressure in the beer. A CO2 system keeps your beer fresh for up to two weeks, and you can even regulate carbonation to your liking. The double-insulated 64-ounce growler (\$149) can also be refrigerated. *thegrommet.com*



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